SEQUENCE 0350 PROLOGUE

INT/EXT. ON BLACK

Inhale. Exhale. A meditative rhythm.

FADE TO:

EXT. CLOUDY SKIES AND SHALLOW WATERS - BLUE HOUR

Inhale. Exhale. Waves roll in. Waves wash out.

An out of focus Waterbender, KATARA, slowly moves with the waves as we gently shift her into focus. She meditatively gathers water into a ball around her.

AANG (V.O.)
Water. Her tribes gather strength from the moon and flow with the tides.

The ball grows and circles her--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. ROCK AND SAND GARDEN - AFTERNOON

A larger than life rock circles the strongest Earthbender in the world, TOPH. The movement of the rock and sand matches the rhythm of the breathing.

Inhale. Exhale. The rock shifts. Sand settles.

AANG (V.O.)
Earth. A kingdom of unshakeable will. Reliable and strong.

She pauses. She lifts her head to breathe revealing the sun that flares the lens. Inhale.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MARBLE THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Exhale. The sound of fire purrs. The flared lens morphs into torches and ceremonial fire reflected on marble floors. Embers lightly crackle. The Fire Lord stands serene.

Property of Paramount Animation

AANG (V.O.)
Fire. A nation capable of great destruction, but also great warmth.

ZUKO, pensive, inhales and gathers fire. He holds it in his palm like a small bird. He exhales and embers spark up. We follow them into the sky--

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. TALL GRASS ON AIR TEMPLE ISLAND - TWILIGHT

The sparks become leaves. The rhythm has stopped. The breathing is gone. Just leaves in the wind.

AANG (V.O.)
Air. Peaceful nomads who danced on the wind.

The leaves dance atop the billowing grass.

AANG (V.O.)
For generations, the nations were kept in balance by the Avatar, master of all four elements.

The leaves flow across the screen, being moved by airbending performed by the spirit of AVATAR KURUK, who then becomes AVATAR KYOSHI, AVATAR ROKU, and finally AVATAR AANG, who continues the movements of his former lives.

AANG (V.O.)
But when that responsibility fell to me as a child, I ran away. I was caught in a deadly storm, but my Avatar spirit preserved me in a sphere of energy, where I stayed for a hundred years.

The floating leaves burn away leaving just one behind. It falls into AANG's hand.

AANG (V.O.)
When I woke up I discovered that the balance that had lasted for millennia had been destroyed by war. The Air Nomads had been wiped out. All of them lost to the mist.

Aang walks alone through the ruins of the Southern Air Temple.

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AANG (V.O.)
All but one. Me.

An ambient breeze picks up. Aang looks into the horizon.

AANG (V.O.)
The time had come for me to fulfill my destiny as the Avatar.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

It's the middle of a huge battle in the Hundred Year War. Rocks CRASH INTO FIRE and spears slam into shields. Earth Kingdom soldiers are being overrun by Fire Nation troops.

Suddenly AANG JOINS THE FRAY.

The Fire Nation soldiers are pushed back as Aang uses all four elements to attack.

The Fire Nation reforms ranks and tries to encircle Aang but he's joined by SOKKA, KATARA, TOPH AND ZUKO.

AANG (V.O.)
I found allies from every nation.

Zuko, Katara and Toph all use their incredible bending as Sokka fearlessly fights with his war club.

Any of them would give their life for the Avatar and the future of their world.

AANG (V.O.)
They became my closest friends.

A SURGE of Fire Nation troops breaks through.

Aang goes into FULL AVATAR STATE.

We follow his light up to a high precipice where he faces off with FIRE LORD OZAI.

AANG (V.O.)
Together, we ended the war.

A final FLASH OF LIGHT--

LATER - AFTER THE BATTLE IS WON

--becomes celebratory sunlight on the conquering heroes.

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The young crew basks in their victory. Katara and Sokka are surrounded by their tribesmen as they hug their father, HAKODA.

Toph joyfully punches her friends the Boulder and the Hippo, who lift her on their shoulders as her parents and other Earth Kingdom citizens look on and cheer.

Zuko is surrounded by FIRE SAGES who bow to their new Lord.

Only Aang stands alone. Smiling and happy, but alone.

The five friends gather in the middle and hug.

AANG (V.O.)
We made a pact that day to come together if the world was ever in danger of falling into chaos again...

The friends fade away, and Aang is left alone.

AANG (V.O.)
...but with my people gone, I couldn't help but feel alone.

TITLE CARD: THE LAST AIRBENDER

FADE TO:

SEQUENCE 0050 AANG AT THE AIR TEMPLE

EXT. SOUTHERN AIR TEMPLE - SUNSET

The ancient structure sits beneath an orange sky.

CLOSE ON: A maple leaf that clings to a branch. It shakes in the wind before giving way to the breeze.

SHOTS OF THE TEMPLE:

A COURTYARD. Snow piled up. Silent.

A HALLWAY. Long shadows. Abandoned.

THE AIR TEMPLE SANCTUARY. Filled with statues but lifeless.

We follow the sound through the empty caves and corridors and find a candlelit room...

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INT. GATHERING HALL - CONTINUOUS

A multi-level room that's big enough to fit a village but currently only one person stands at its center -- AANG.

Hundreds of relics fill the room, the last vestiges of Aang's lost culture, each one representing an Airbender forever silenced by the devastation of the Hundred Year War.

A pinwheel. An Airbender flute. A tattered banner.

Row after row of relics, all still and silent, the wind that used to make them move, lost.

Aang carries another artifact to the center, an ANCIENT FIGURINE of an Airbender doing a handstand.

AANG
This is the last piece.

He stacks it gently atop a pyramid of other figurines, forming a lively tableau of Airbenders in action.

He airbends gently into a hole at the base and we see how it works -- the figurines all float joyously in the air for a moment. Aang smiles as he watches the miniature airbending circus troupe, the kind that once roamed the land.

But when he stops airbending the pieces settle back into place and his smile disappears. This is only a simulation of life. His real people are gone.

From behind he hears a SHAKING NOISE and turns to see Momo batting around some ancient prayer beads.

AANG (CONT'D)
Momo, no! That's Ji-Wing's jade!
That's 1,000 years old!

Momo ends up getting tangled in the beads and tumbles into a pile of other artifacts, landing with the CRUNCHING SOUND of damaged historical relics.

AANG (CONT'D)
Ugh...
(gets an idea)
Hey Momo, you want to play with something that's not a priceless artifact? Huh?

Momo pops out of the pile and sees Aang creating a airbending ball in his hands.

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AANG (CONT'D)
Look at this! You ready?

Momo's eyes widen with excitement. Aang WINDS UP, circling the ball in the air with his bending as Momo HOPS AROUND, excited. Finally--

AANG (CONT'D)
Go get it!

ZIP! Aang airbends the ball out of the room and Momo flies after it. Aang settles down into lotus position to meditate.

EXT. HALL - SAME

The airball ROCKETS down the hall with Momo chasing behind!

EXT. TEMPLE - SUNSET

Momo shoots out of the temple and SLAM!

He hits something and falls to the ground. He looks up.

A rough-looking WARRIOR MONK scowls down at him. His massive hand comes down and covers Momo's face.

ON APPA. He's tied down with thick ropes.

THREE DARK FIGURES slink past him into the temple.

INT. GATHERING HALL - SUNSET

Aang sits in the lotus position in front of his shrine of relics, meditating. Communing with his ancestors.

He concentrates on his breath. The only sound. Inhale...

Then he hears another sound, like a hissing.

SUPER SLOW-MO Aang turns just in time as an ARROW flies for his head.

Aang jerks back and EXHALES, his Airbender force of breath just enough to move the arrow a millimeter in flight as it SCRAPES his cheek. Blood flows.

BACK TO REAL TIME as Aang FLIPS BACKWARDS and sees another arrow coming straight for him. Following right behind it are four attackers who clearly want him dead.

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The archer, JIE, long and willowy as her bow, is already firing another arrow.

The massive warrior monk, YUDDHA, stomps toward Aang with his danda, a long, heavy pole-axe with a giant iron head.

VIK, the personification of righteous discipline, sweeps in wearing Water Tribe garb and wielding dual Daiso swords.

Aang, already dodging Jie's arrows, sees a DART TEAR through his robe and looks over to see--

SOGO, tiny and acrobatic, skittering along the rock wall toward Aang, clinging to the rock with Tekko-Kagi steel hand claws as he tosses darts and shuriken.

They all move with weird, jerky, too-fast energy. And now they've surrounded Aang and are attacking all at once.

Aang just dodges an axe blade, jumps over a sword, feints away from flashing steel claws and here comes another arrow--

AIRBLAST! Aang Airbends in every direction, pushing everyone back and giving himself some room to operate.

He firebends at Jie, burning up an arrow as it comes for him.

He earthbends a boulder at Yuddha, catching him in the chest and knocking him backward.

He waterbends an icy patch under Sogo to send him sliding away.

But here comes Vik with her twin swords and Aang is back on the defensive, ducking and dodging again.

He fires back with his Airbending to give himself more room and try to push everyone back again, but they're coming at him so fast.

AANG
Who are you? Why are you doing this?

VIK
Just give us the staff!

AANG
What are you talking about?

As Vik, Yuddha and Jie keep attacking, Sogo starts rooting through Aang's relics, trashing them.

Property of Paramount Animation

SOGO
(to bandits)
What does it look like?!

YUDDAH
I don't know, it's ancient. Look for something old!

AANG
Hey! Leave those alone!

He earthbends a rock cage around Sogo and then fires it away from his precious artifacts.

But while he's distracted, Yuddha grabs him in his meaty paws and starts to SQUEEZE.

VIK
Just give it up and we'll leave.

AANG
Ughhhhhh. Stop! I don't want to hurt you! Just tell me what you want, maybe I can help!

He gives Yuddha a big Avatar KICK in the gut, sending him tumbling away and freeing himself.

But more arrows are flying and he barely manages to duck and airbend them off course. Vik is on him again with her two sword attack.

Aang firebends at her, trying to keep her off him, but she's lightning quick.

Sogo has wriggled out of his cage and is back in the mix. They're all coming for Aang again.

Once again Aang AIRBLASTS THEM BACK, creating some room. While he has a little space he runs for something hidden in the corner of the shrine -- his STAFF.

He reaches it just in time and holds it up to block two arrows and a shuriken.

VIK
The staff!

SOGO
Is that it?

YUDDAH
Get it!

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Sogo LEAPS onto the staff like a squirrel, climbing toward Aang.

Aang SWINGS the staff, WHIPPING Sogo away and airbending them all back enough to pop open the glider and ZIP OUT of the temple, arrows flying after him all the way.

His attackers give chase.

INT. TEMPLE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Aang tries to outrun his pursuers with his glider, but they're hot on his heels.

Yuddah raises a medieval-looking launching device and fires an explosive just past Aang, collapsing the hallway and blocking his escape.

Aang manages to shield himself, but the explosion rocks the already damaged temple. The tower begins to collapse on top of them all.

VIK
(to Yuddah)
You fool!

SOGO
We've got to get out of here!

Bricks fall, walls collapse. They're all trapped.

Aang sees his home crumbling and makes a quick decision. He goes into the AVATAR STATE. His eyes and tattoos GLOW as he lifts up on a wind spiral.

He extends his arms, performing incredible earthbending to hold the tower in place, stopping it from crushing them all!

But now Aang is a sitting duck, giving all of his strength to save the tower. Jie takes aim at Aang with her bow -- but Sogo stops her.

SOGO (CONT'D)
If you kill him, we all die!

Aang uses all his strength to stop the collapse and slowly reassemble the temple... brick by brick. The path opens up.

AANG
(trembling and strained)
Go now! I don't know how much longer I can hold this!

Property of Paramount Animation

The bandits run past Aang, amazed that he's sparing them. Vik stops and turns back to Aang.

VIK
Why are you letting us go?

AANG
I'm an Air Nomad. It's what I do.
Now HURRY!

Vik runs to escape with her accomplices.

As Aang continues to struggle against the weight of the temple, some bricks shake loose and one hits Aang. He falls to a knee.

Another chunk breaks free and falls toward him, but Appa makes a heroic entrance, with Momo riding in the saddle!

Appa whips the collapsing rock with his tail, blowing it away just before it crushes Aang.

Aang musters his strength and pushes the temple back upright, holding it in place precariously as he Earthbends fallen bricks back in place.

After a final adjustment he gingerly stops bending. He waits. It keeps standing! Aang saved his home.

Aang goes out of the Avatar state and slumps to the floor, exhausted. Appa lands near him and Momo hops onto Aang's shoulder, concerned.

Momo CHITTERS, agitated.

AANG (CONT'D)
I don't what they wanted.

Aang painfully climbs up into Appa's saddle.

He collapses on Appa's back, gasping for breath. His robes are torn, his ribs are killing him. He wipes his face, which is covered in blood.

AANG (CONT'D)
Appa, get me to Republic City.

(to Appa)
Yip yip!

Appa slowly lifts off, flying away from the damaged but still standing Air Temple. Aang has successfully protected his past home. But for how long?

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SEQUENCE 0125 BACK TO REPUBLIC CITY

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - PLAYGROUND - DAY

A group of children play a hacky-sack style game in the city center. The group tries to keep a little ball from touching the ground, but can't use their hands. An audience has gathered to watch the excitement.

PLAYER #1
672!

The ball almost hits the ground but one kid makes a last second save. The crowd CHEERS.

ONLOOKER
They might actually pull it off.

The game continues, the team scoring one after another.

PLAYER #2
673... 674... 675... 676...

The ball goes sailing up. A player waits for it to fall, perfectly positioned for a return kick.

PLAYER #1
I got it!

But his teammate comes up from behind to kick it first.

PLAYER #2
Out of my way!

The players collide and the ball flies out of bounds.

PLAYER #1
Nooooo!

It's about to hit the ground, but at the last moment it's saved by KATARA.

The crowd CHEERS.

CROWD
Yeah! / Katara!

The players rush over to thank her for saving the game.

KIDS
Woo hoo! We did it! Yeah! It's a new record!

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Katara walks over to speak with the player who pushed her teammate out of the way.

KATARA
Victory is best celebrated WITH friends.

The player gives her a sheepish smile.

KATARA (CONT'D)
We are always stronger as a team.

AANG (O.S.)
Katara is right. You'd better listen to her. She knows a little something about teamwork.

Aang has arrived! He feeds Appa a magma melon then walks over greet Katara.

AANG (CONT'D)
Together we can do so much. Just look around.

There's a moment when the kids don't realize who's speaking. Then...

KIDS
Oh my gosh, it's the Avatar!!

The kids rush over to Aang.

KIDS (CONT'D)
Avatar! / Do something air bendy! / Avatar! Avatar! Avatar!

Aang looks to Katara.

AANG
Uh... Katara.

KIDS
Can I wear your cape?

KATARA
Show us what you got.

Aang airbends the ball, sending it zooming around the kids, much to their delight.

With the kids distracted, Aang and Katara hop on Appa and take off through the streets of Republic City. People CHEER as they fly by.

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CROWDS
Welcome back! / Avatar Aang! / He looked at me, he totally looked at me!

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - SKIES ABOVE - CONTINUOUS

Momo pops up to say hello.

KATARA
Momo! It's so good to see you.

Appa gives a jealous GRUNT.

KATARA (CONT'D)
I missed you too, old friend. It's been too long.

Now Appa gives her a loving GRUNT.

AANG
Republic City is really flourishing.

KATARA
It hasn't been easy, but I'm very proud of the people.

Aang takes in the view. He sees a group of construction workers, made up of all kinds of benders, working together to build a structure.

AANG
Earthbenders, Waterbenders and Firebenders working together.

KATARA
There was a time when I never thought it would be possible. But it's happening. More and more each day.

As they fly past the CABBAGE MERCHANT stand, Appa airbends all the cabbages up into his mouth.

CABBAGE MERCHANT
MY CABBAGES!

Aang and Katara share a laugh.

KATARA
Welcome home Aang.

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AANG
You've come a long way Katara.

KATARA
We've come a long way.

Katara puts her hands over Aang's. She senses something.

KATARA (CONT'D)
You're hurt.

0850 KATARA HEALS AANG

EXT. KATARA'S APARTMENT BALCONY - NIGHT

Aang sits at the balcony edge as Katara works on Aang with her spiritual healing waterbending.

KATARA
(manipulating his spine)
Take a deep breath...

Aang breathes in.

KATARA (CONT'D)
...aaand exhale.

AANG
...they were so fast, and strong...

Katara does a QUICK JERK with her water.

AANG (CONT'D)
They were looking for someth-
AAAAAAAARGH!

Aang moves around a little. He's improved.

AANG (CONT'D)
I firmly believe you could do that without it hurting me so much.

KATARA
Aang I'm worried. If they were willing to hurt the Avatar, what else are they willing to do?

AANG
All I could think about in that moment was that this could be it. I'm the last Airbender. If I die, my culture dies with me.

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Katara kneels in front of him and hugs him.

KATARA
That's a lot to carry. I know how hard this is for you. But you're here with me now, in the city we built together, surrounded by people who love you.

She smiles at him and he cheers up a little.

AANG
It's good to see you again, Katara.

She gives him a kiss.

KATARA
You too, stranger.

Aang replays the attack again in his mind.

AANG
Whoever attacked me, they were willing to kill to find this artifact. I need to find out why.

Katara knows what he's thinking. She nods.

KATARA
We're going to need some help.

QUICK CUTS AROUND THE WORLD as messages go out to all the members of Team Avatar to alert them to come to Republic city.

SEQUENCE 0175 ALERTING TEAM AVATAR

INT. FIRE NATION - ROYAL PALACE - DAY

Zuko sits in a counsel meeting, bored. He places his ROYAL STAMP on a document, which is quickly rolled up and replaced with another in a long line of documents.

FIRE NATION COUNSELOR
My Lord, next on the agenda is a petition that has come from the Southern Sea Territory...

The messenger bursts into the meeting.

Property of Paramount Animation

MESSENGER
Your Majesty! An urgent message from the Avatar has arrived.

Zuko perks up.

ZUKO
Read it to me.

The messenger unfurls the note, then looks around, awkward

MESSENGER
(reluctantly)
Hey Zuzu. I hope I'm not interrupting a meeting with that boring counselor you told me about...

Zuko gives the counselor an apologetic look.

EXT. SOUTHERN WATER TRIBE - DAY

Sokka shows off his new invention, some kind of flying bicycle, to a group of Water Tribe children.

SOKKA
You can shoot through the sky with the flame launcher, unleash water bombs, and it turns into a sled to help you land. What do you think?

WATER-TRIBE KID #1
Eeehhh, lame.

SOKKA
Lame?!

Suddenly, a messenger bird appears at the window.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Hey, a message from Aang!

WATER-TRIBE KID #1
The Avatar? Really?

SOKKA
Oh, now you think I'm cool.

INT. EARTH KINGDOM - TOPH'S METALBENDING ACADEMY - DAY

Toph yells at a class of metalbending students.

Property of Paramount Animation

TOPH
Toughen up, tenderfeet! I want to see you summon your fury--

Toph metalbends cables around her and creates a MULTI-HEADED HYDRA of snaking metal. The students look at her, terrified.

TOPH (CONT'D)
--channel your power and show me you're ready to be a Metalbender, the greatest, most terrifying benders in the universe!

A MESSENGER runs into the room.

MESSENGER
A message for you from the Avatar--

Toph turns, still wielding her frightening metal arms.

TOPH
What?!

MESSENGER
Aaaagh!

He passes out on the floor. Toph smiles at her students.

TOPH
See? That's what I'm talking about.

SEQUENCE 0250 MEET XIAN

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - HILLS ABOVE - DAY

Aang sits in the lotus position on the hills above, high on a cliff face overlooking the bay and the city. He focuses and the WORLD SHIFTS, his cliff SINKS and the BAY RISES as he shifts into--

EXT. SPIRIT WORLD - DAY

The rising bay carries a giant OYSTER SHELL floating across from Aang. It opens, revealing the ancient AVATAR XIAN, a wise old man with a long beard who sits inside.

AANG
Avatar Xian, I'm Aang.

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XIAN
This is quite a surprise. So few incarnations come this way for my *pearls* of wisdom.
(chuckling)
You like that?

Aang nods, forcing a smile.

AANG
That was a good one, yes. Because of the oyster shell.

XIAN
You know, in my time I was known as the wittiest Avatar. Also the wisest.

AANG
Then I'm glad I finally reached this far back. I've spoken to many past incarnations today but none of them could help me.

XIAN
Yes, I'm more difficult to reach than some other Avatars, but their knowledge isn't quite as... expansive. Have you spoken with Tungbuk?

AANG
Actually I did.

XIAN
Of course! Quite easy to reach.
(smug)
Well surely I can answer your questions and you won't need to seek out another...

AANG
I'm so thankful. I'm trying to find out about an ancient staff.

Xian immediately looks intrigued. He earthbends up a tall tower of scrolls and begins rifling through them.

XIAN
Well, there have been many powerful staff wielders throughout history...
(MORE)

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XIAN (CONT'D)
General Yang and his Iron Rod of Justice, Ju Wen's Blossoming Bough - she used various waterbending techniques to make incredible flowers grow - and then there's Duk Lo, who supposedly carried the widest staff ever--
(examining a scroll)
--although it looks more like a stump if you ask me, seems he mostly used it for sitting...

AANG
The people I met seemed to think the staff was powerful on its own.

Xian shakes his head, looking very befuddled. He bends one tower of scrolls away and pulls up another tower.

XIAN
Well that's absurd. The only staff I can recall that had any power on its own was that of Avatar Sonam, but NO ONE knows about that.

AANG
Wait, who's Avatar Sonam? And why does no one know about her?

Xian stops, realizing that he's said something he shouldn't have. He quickly tries to cover.

XIAN
Oh, no one important. Let me tell you more about Duk Lo's stump! I--

AANG
Avatar Xian, I have to find this staff. If I don't, it could fall into the hands of some very bad people, and who knows what they might do with it. Please... who is Avatar Sonam?

Xian sighs. The cat's out of the bag.

XIAN
Sonam is the great lost Avatar. No one has ever been able to connect with her.

He earthbends a likeness of Sonam out of the ground in front of Aang. She holds her staff.

Property of Paramount Animation

XIAN (CONT'D)
The legends say she presided over a golden age of balance, and with a wave of her staff, she could turn people into benders.

Aang is mind-blown.

AANG
She could give people bending?

His thoughts immediately go to his lost culture.

AANG (CONT'D)
Is that possible?

Xian shrugs. The "sand Sonam" he had created vanishes.

XIAN
No one knows for sure. All traces of her vanished. All that remains of Sonam are rumors and myths...

He seems done talking. Aang waits. Finally...

AANG
Surely the wisest, wittiest Avatar must have a little more knowledge to share, something no one else knows...

Xian shakes his head. He doesn't like where this is going.

XIAN
No, and I wouldn't go looking. If the myths are true, the power that Avatar Sonam uncovered could alter the balance of the world...and If it fell into the wrong hands, the devastation could be catastrophic.

AANG
You don't understand, the world I live in is already out of balance... I am the last of my kind. And I need to change that before it's too late. So please, help me. Where is Sonam's staff?

Avatar Xian gives an uncertain look, then he shuffles through some more scrolls ultimately coming up with nothing.

Property of Paramount Animation

XIAN
I'm sorry, there is very little information recorded about Sonam. All I can tell you is that she was last seen heading into the Baihu Mountain range.

SEQUENCE 0650 TEAM AVATAR REUNITES

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY DOCKS - DAY

Sokka gets off an old Water Tribe ship from the war, *The Snow Leopard*. She's a little battered, but still plenty seaworthy. He waves to the crew as he saunters down the gangplank.

SOKKA
Catch you at the Salty Seal later!

He turns around to find himself in a big, sisterly hug.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Oof! Hey Katara!

He hugs his sister back as he looks around.

KATARA
I'm glad you're back.

SOKKA
I hardly recognized the place. Is that a fancy hotel?

TOPH (O.S.)
Yeah and they don't let just any riff-raff that tumbles off a dinghy in there!

They turn to see Toph coming over and they all embrace.

SOKKA
I'll have you know that the Sea Leopard was the pride of the fleet when she launched, a real...

KIDS
Look! Fire Lord Zuko!

Everyone turns to see the incredible fleet of ships coming into the harbor, led by Zuko's own warship, THE INFERNO. Even the smallest of them dwarfs Sokka's boat.

Property Of Paramount Animation

TOPH
You were saying?

Sokka sulks away.

SOKKA
Showoff.

INT. WATER TRIBE THEMED CLUB - LATER

Aang, Katara, Toph, Zuko and Sokka are gathered around a table with Water Tribe food and drinks. A party with Water Tribe music and dancing goes on all around them.

Momo wanders around the table, nibbling at sides and garnishes. Sokka is talking up his bicycle invention.

SOKKA
I'm telling you, this sky-sled I've invented is going to change the way people travel.

TOPH
Every ride will be a one-way trip to the graveyard.

They all laugh. Sokka shakes his head. No respect.

AANG
It's so good to see you guys.

KATARA
Yes, here, grab a glass--
(hands Aang a drink)
--a toast! Team Avatar back in Republic City!

They toast.

ALL
Republic City!

They all drink, then keep digging into their meal.

ZUKO
Aang, I'm glad you made it back here safe and sound.

SOKKA
But why would anyone want to attack the Avatar?

Property of Paramount Animation

AANG
They were looking for a powerful relic. Legend says it can give people the ability to bend.

Everyone looks at him, totally shocked.

ZUKO
Can that be true?

TOPH
Imagine if Zuko's father could turn anyone into a firebender. We'd have never won the war.

ZUKO
What about the Earth Kingdom loyalists? Think of the army they could raise.

KATARA
Republic City is just getting started, we can't risk losing the peace we all worked so hard to build.

SOKKA
There's no telling what could happen if it gets into the wrong hands!

AANG
But in our hands... Imagine what we could do. I mean, I could restore balance to the world. I could bring back Airbenders!

Everyone sits in stunned silence for a moment.

KATARA
Are you sure this isn't just a legend?

TOPH
Well let's find out. Where is it? Let's go get it.

KATARA
Toph, you're the last person I thought would believe this story.

Property of Paramount Animation

TOPH
It doesn't matter what I believe. These knuckleheads were willing to kill Aang. If we can find the big power stick before somebody else does, sign me up.

Aang looks around at them. They all nod.

AANG
I don't want to put any of you in danger.

Everyone sits with that for a moment. They all know what that would mean for Aang. Katara puts her hand on his.

KATARA
You know I'll do anything I can to help.

ZUKO
Me too.

SOKKA
Hey we all agreed to the pact. If you need us, we'll follow you to the ends of the earth. So where are we headed?

SMASH TO:

SEQUENCE 1150 BASE CAMP

EXT. BAIHU MOUNTAIN - BASE - DAY

It's a RAGING BLIZZARD. Sokka is on his knees gasping for breath.

SOKKA
(gasping in the altitude)
Are we there yet?

Aang comes up.

AANG
About a hundred more yards to the base of the mountain.

Sokka looks out and sees the rocky base jutting out of the snow.

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SOKKA
I can make it.

AANG
Then maybe two miles straight up?

Sokka manages to raise his head.

REVEAL the mountain disappears high above into the gray, snowy clouds.

SOKKA
Please kill me now.

Behind them, Appa has landed and everyone is trying to set up a base camp. The wind whips their tents around, making it nearly impossible to set up shelter.

Katara and Toph are trying to pull out a tent canvas, but it gets caught in a gust of wind that RIPS it out of their hands.

Aang LEAPS after it, using his airbending to catch it and contain it, then floats back to earth.

Toph quickly earthbends some rocks up, weighing down the corners and putting a pillar in the middle.

TOPH
Tent done. I'm getting in before I freeze to death.

She crawls under and Sokka follows.

SOKKA
Zuko, get in here with some fire.

ZUKO
I can barely create any, there's so little oxygen up here.

He follows Sokka to cover. Katara snuggles up to Aang.

AANG
I don't know if I can take everyone much further.

KATARA
Aang, you know that no one will let you go up there on your own. We're all here for you.

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AANG
I know. Come on, let's get some rest.

They go into the tent.

INT. TENT - LATER

Everyone is asleep, snuggled up around a pile of hot, glowing rocks in the center of the tent. Momo is curled around Sokka like a little fur stole.

Katara rolls over. She slowly wakes and looks around.

KATARA
Aang?

SEQUENCE 1200 ICE MOUNTAIN

EXT. BAIHU MOUNTAIN - NIGHT

Aang fights through a blizzard on the tallest peak in the world, struggling to summit. But even the Avatar might not be powerful enough to make this climb.

Aang leaps, airbending from one point to the next until the air is too thin for him to propel himself upward any more.

AANG
Air's -- getting -- thin -- up here.

A GUST OF WIND nearly knocks him off the mountain.

Thinking fast, he earthbends a long ledge straight out from the mountainside. He grabs on, swinging wildly. His hat is blown off and carried away by the wind.

AANG (CONT'D)
I loved that hat.

Bending handholds out of the ice, Aang continues slowly making his way up the ice-wall until he finally reaches the precipice of a great glacial peak. Using the last of his strength, he hoists himself over the ledge. He takes a moment to catch his breath.

As he gets to his feet, he thinks he sees a GLINT up ahead. A little flash of light that catches his eye.

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He bends the snow cover out of the way to reveal A MASSIVE GLACIER WITH A GLOWING BALL INSIDE.

SEQUENCE 1300 AVALANCHE

Aang can't believe it.

AANG
Sonam? How is this possible?

Slowly and arduously, Aang begins a repetitive series of waterbending moves that liquefies the ice directly in front of him, moves it to the side, and then allows it to freeze back in place. Like displacing earth when digging a tunnel.

Aang continues this sequence of moves further and further into the glacier, slowly making his way to the center.

Aang bends the last of the ice, coming face to face with the MYSTERIOUS ENERGY BALL. It's exactly like the one Katara and Sokka found him in years earlier.

He starts ENERGY BENDING THE GLOWING BALL and then...

BANG! A giant ENERGY BLAST EXPLODES over the mountaintop!

A ENERGY BEAM SHOOTS UP into the sky. Aang is KNOCKED BACK by the power.

An ANCIENT MAN (TAGA) falls to the ground, barely conscious.

TAGA
Uhhhhh...

Aang runs over to check on him.

AANG
You're not Sonam.

But before Aang has a chance to find out who he is--

RUMBLE... The glacier starts to COLLAPSE.

Aang hoists the man up, moving toward the entrance of the tunnel as the walls begin to collapse around them.

A large rock almost blocks their way out, but Aang quickly earthbends a passage through to the icy ledge beyond.

Once outside, Aang looks back to see the glacier is collapsing behind them. It starts to SLIDE.

IT'S AN AVALANCHE moving fast toward them!

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Aang does a bending move and BREAKS OFF the ice ledge they are on, splitting it in half and sending them both tumbling over the side of the mountain.

The mountain peak breaks apart as they fall. Ice, snow and rock follows hot on their heels.

As they hurtle down, Aang ZIGS AND ZAGS, avoiding large chunks of rock.

He looks over to where the Ancient Man is falling. Using earthbending, Aang runs across a falling rock and LEAPS into the air towards the Man.

Aang lands underneath, catching him, and they continue their descent, still followed closely by the avalanche behind them.

With the falling rock closing in behind them, Aang's eyes and tattoos begin to GLOW. He sends a BLAST of firebending to keep them airborne, but it's not enough. The rock crashes into them and Aang loses his hold on the Man.

But as they FLOAT IN THE AIR, Aang feels something grab ahold of him. It's the Ancient Man, his face now clearly showing, revealing an arrow tattoo on his forehead. He's AN AIRBENDER!

He uses airbending to help guide their fall and to keep them from being crushed by falling rocks until -

KATARA
Aang!

Appa swoops under Aang with Toph, Sokka, and Katara, narrowly avoiding being crushed by the avalanche. He flies them to safety, leaving Eel Shark Mountain behind. Momo jumps onto Aang's shoulder as Katara hugs him.

SOKKA
I thought you were looking for a staff. Who's this guy?

They all turn to look at the Ancient Man.

AANG
An Airbender...

SEQUENCE 1400 TAGA WAKES

Property of Paramount Animation

EXT. BAIHU MOUNTAIN BASE CAMP - MORNING

Appa rests outside. Baihu is nothing but a scenic picture postcard in the background now. The raging blizzard at the summit is worlds away.

INT. AANG'S TENT, BAIHU MOUNTAIN BASE CAMP - MORNING

A fire is crackling in a small iron fireplace. We're warm and cozy. On Taga, asleep, laying on a bed with a blanket covering him. But, even in this state, there's no doubting that he is a physical specimen.

REVERSE ANGLE ON Aang and Team Avatar looking on over Taga's sleeping form. Toph repeatedly keeps stomping on the metal floor.

SOKKA
(to Toph)
What are you doing?

TOPH
Getting a better look.
(to Aang)
Hey Avatar, how long ago do you think he's from?

Aang looks at the intricate tattoos that line Taga's body.

AANG
These tattoos are ancient. I mean, I'm not like an expert-expert-

SOKKA
You're the only Air Nomad in the world. You're an expert.

AANG
Yeah. Well, then I'd say he's from, maybe, 5,000 years ago?

Toph sniffs the air.

TOPH
Five thousand years ago! I mean, he even smells attractive, right?

KATARA
Toph!

TOPH
What? Someone else confirm.

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KATARA
Come on! This is serious.

SOKKA
What does “attractive” even mean?

TOPH
Just give me a straight confirmation! Is he-

ZUKO
He’s very attractive.

The rest of the team looks over at Zuko -- where did that come from?

ZUKO (CONT’D)
(analytical)
Excellent bone structure; glossy hair. Good nutrition. Toph’s right.

TOPH
Thank you, Fire Lord.

TAGA (O.S.)
(weakly)
Sonam. Sonam...

The Team looks over to see Taga stirring awake.

TAGA (CONT’D)
Sonam!

AANG
Hey, hey, take it easy. Don’t worry, you’re with friends.

TAGA
Where is she? Where is Avatar Sonam?

AANG
You knew Sonam? I’m not sure where to start or how to explain, but a lot of time has passed since Sonam’s era. I’m the Avatar now. I’m Aang.

TAGA
If you’re the Avatar... then... how long have I been out?

TOPH
Unclear, maybe five thousand years, but you seem fine.

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TAGA
WHAT? No, I'm too late.

AANG
What do you mean?

Taga, still weak and disoriented, struggles to remember.

TAGA
In the time that I'm from, there was a invasion in my homeland. I was rushing to save the Air Nomads but then... I woke up here.

A heavy silence. Sokka attempts to lighten the mood.

SOKKA
Hey guys, we should let him know the bright side of the situation. You are going to be a gift to this world! Everyone will be amazed to see another surviving Airbender! Aang's not the last anymore!

TAGA
Wait. What? What do you mean last?

SOKKA
Hehe... Well... It's a bit of a long, complicated story.

TOPH
Because, there aren't any Air Nomads anymore.

Taga is shocked.

TAGA
"... aren't Air Nomads?"

Aang shakes his head.

AANG
We've all been wiped out. I've... I've tried to-

Aang finds himself overcome with emotion. He bows his head. Katara moves to comfort Aang.

KATARA
Aang. Hey-

But she stops when Taga's hands lift Aang's face.

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TAGA
Brother. I can see you have experienced great hurt and pain.

Aang has no response. Katara's heart breaks for him.

TAGA (CONT'D)
In my time, we had ways to help our brothers and sisters heal trauma without having to be hurt again by speaking of it... Do you know this way?

Aang shakes his head, "no."

TAGA (CONT'D)
No. Of course. You are the only Air Nomad in the world. Would you like me to show you?

A beat. And then Aang nods.

CUT TO:

SEQUENCE 1550 SHARED BREATH

EXT. BASECAMP - MAGIC HOUR

Aang and Taga sit facing each other. The others look on from nearby but give them distance.

AANG (V.O.)
What is this?

TAGA (V.O.)
Shared breath.

AANG (V.O.)
What's shared breath?

TAGA (V.O.)
When two airbenders sync up their breathing, they can share memories without ever having to speak them. Show me what pains you, Aang.

ON Aang and Taga meditating, breathing in time with each other.

Aang and Taga's breathing has aligned. We see on their faces that they are beginning to share the same emotions.

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SHARED BREATH VISION:

As they inhale and exhale, we see the energy flowing through their lungs and around their bodies.

The world starts to BLOW AWAY like chalkdust, the breath and energy clearing the world around them.

CLOSE ON AANG as he inhales and then blows out a breath that WHIRLS INTO A PICTURE SURROUNDING THEM. Somewhere between soft pastel and sand painting, the memories are fluid and ephemeral, shifting like dust in the wind.

Aang and Taga keep meditating as the world around them transforms into quick scenes from Aang's life.

THE SOUTHERN AIR TEMPLE HALLWAYS

Aang rides his airball through the hallways, sending KIDS and MONKS flying out of his path as he laughs. MONK GYATSO watches him lovingly from a balcony as Air Bison fly through the sky.

AANG (V.O.)
I grew up at the Southern Air Temple. It was so full of life; The closest thing I ever had to family. Until...

We PUSH IN on Gyatso's face and the meditation wind BLOWS the picture into--

SOUTHERN AIR TEMPLE SANCTUARY

Now Gyatso looks down on Aang from a platform filled with wise monks.

GYATSO
Storm clouds are gathering.

PASANG
I fear that war may be upon us, young Avatar.

GYATSO
We need you, Aang.

Aang lowers his head, his responsibility crushing him.

We PUSH IN ON AANG'S FACE and his swirling emotions turn chaotic and obliterate the scene, transforming it into--

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AANG (V.O.)
I thought being the Avatar meant I had to give up everything I loved. I was afraid. So I ran away.

A STORM

Aang rides Appa through blinding rain and finally THEY CRASH into the sea. His Avatar spirit encases him and he becomes FROZEN.

AANG (V.O.)
I was caught in a deadly storm. But fate intervened, and for 100 years, the world went on without me.

But the ICE IS SMASHED TO PIECES by a Fire Nation Komodo Rhino as it becomes a wall of--

THE SOUTHERN AIR TEMPLE

It's being overrun by murderous Fire Nation forces.

The FLAMES LEAP into the air and blow in the meditation memory wind, transforming into--

SOKKA AND KATARA

They stand in front of the iceberg as Aang and Appa step out and whirl into--

AANG (V.O.)
I'll never forget how I felt... the day I found out that the Air Nomads were gone, that the Fire Nation wiped them out. It was my fault. I wasn't there to save them.

AANG KNEELING, WEEPING

He's at the Air Temple, surrounded by the bones of his people.

THROUGH THE MEMORY DUST we can see present day Aang, crying along with his young self. All his people are gone.

Young Aang picks up a handful of dust and ancient ashes. As it runs through his fingers it's picked up by TAGA'S ENERGY BREATH.

TAGA (V.O.)
I feel your burden, Aang. But there is hope. Let me show you.

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Now the wind blows in a new direction and the pictures change to Taga's past.

EXT. SONAM'S CITY, SONAM'S AIR TEMPLE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Taga's memories are much more defined, less wild and emotional than Aang's. He has more control of this breath-sharing discipline. The dust and ash from Aang vision transforms into-

YOUNG TAGA, not much younger than he is now, but with a fresh light of youth in his eyes. He is walking up a very tall series of steps. Young Taga doesn't speak, we only hear Taga's voice.

TAGA (V.O.)
In my time, The Four Nations lived together in a city of learning and innovation. We called it Jharana.

It's A TERRACED GOLDEN CITY BATHED IN LIGHT. It's beautiful.

TAGA (V.O.)
The world was perfectly balanced. And if was protected by Avatar Sonam.

TAGA looks up at the top of the steps and he sees SONAM, an Air Nomad priestess. She is the Avatar world's version of grey-eyed Athena.

WE see people from all the Four Nations walking up and down the stairs, tilling the rice patties on the terraces, and filling every corner of the city's life. It's a beautiful sight to behold.

As he gets closer to Sonam, we sees hundreds of Air Nomads, dressed in orange, blessing Taga as he walks up the stairs.

TAGA (V.O.)
And amidst this harmony, Sonam realized one of the greatest achievements in history.

Taga approaches Sonam and kneels before her. We can see the kindness radiating out of her eyes.

TAGA (V.O.)
She took a lowly non-bender like me, and gave me the power to bend air.

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We see Sonam touch an ENERGY STAFF to Taga's forehead. Once this is done, Taga lifts his arms to the sky and the air energy that flows from his hands sends thousands of marigolds flying up into the air. It's such a beautiful sight.

TAGA (V.O.)
It was the greatest day of my life.

The marigolds TRANSFORM back into energy dust and swirl away into the sky as we--

RETURN TO:

Aang and Taga emerge from their meditation take a moment to recover from what they experienced. Aang wipes a tear from his eye. He just witnessed something beautiful and unbelievable.

AANG
I'd hoped it was true but I didn't really believe it could be done...

TAGA
It's as real as I am.

Aang sits a moment in disbelief. Then Taga continues.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Aang, our situation is dire. A world cannot live in true balance while missing an entire element. We must rebuild the air nomads. You owe it to your fallen friends. I owe it to Sonam. Together you and I can heal the past.

AANG
Do you know where Sonam's staff is? I thought it was here, but instead we found you.

TAGA
There's only one place it could be and stay secret from the world. I will show you the way. Together we can achieve anything.

AANG
I'm willing to do whatever it takes.

TAGA
That's all I needed to hear.

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Aang and Taga clasp each other by the arms. A sacred bond has formed.

SEQUENCE 1950 SETTING SAIL

EXT. THE OPEN OCEAN, SKIES ABOVE - DAY

From a SEA BIRD'S EYE VIEW, we see a swath of deep blue that is so vibrant that it almost hurts our eyes.

PUSH IN to FIND, a FIRE NATION AIRSHIP traveling at high speed leaving a long wind trail behind it.

SOKKA (O.S.)
Is this thing all right to be traveling this fast?!

INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP, WHEELHOUSE - SAME

Zuko is at the wheel, looking out over the horizon, Momo on his shoulder like a pirate's parrot. Clouds are ZIPPING past the windows.

ZUKO
Seeing that no one has ever flown one directly into an atmospheric stream of wind before, I guess we'll have to find out.

TOPH
Taga said it would be fine.

ZUKO
I'm not sure Taga is the world's most reliable first mate. He hasn't even told us where we're going.

Through the windows of the Wheelhouse, we can see Aang and Taga playing with Appa. They can't hear Zuko and don't look.

KATARA
Look how happy Aang is. It must be incredible to have another Airbender around.

Sokka looks at some intricate looking instruments on the bridge. The readings are all over the place.

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SOKKA
These seem to be spinning in a way that... perhaps is not how they were designed?

Zuko looks at them, concerned.

ZUKO
I think that one of us should go find out what Taga's plan is.

Everyone looks over at Katara.

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP, DECK - SAME

Appa ROLLS ON HIS BACK, making hilarious HAPPY NOISES. Taga lies facedown on Appa's belly, spread eagle and scratching with his hands and feet, which is driving Appa crazy! Aang looks on and laughs.

TAGA
Oh, I'd give anything to be able to see my Air Bison again.

AANG
What was his name?

TAGA
Her. Her name was "Hami." She was just a calf when I-

Katara appears next to Aang, her hair whipping in the wind. Appa heads over to her and nuzzles her. Loves Katara.

KATARA
(holding some silk lashings)
Uhm, we have room for Momo in the wheelhouse, but Appa's too big.

Katara pets Appa's muzzle. Loves Appa.

KATARA (CONT'D)
I'd never want to tie him down, but I'm afraid he'll get blown off the deck in the storm.

TAGA
(patting Appa on the nose)
Air bison were the original Airbenders. Appa will never be afraid of the wind.

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Aang takes the silks from Katara.

AANG
Thanks, Katara. We'll make sure he stays safe.

KATARA
(to Taga)
Taga, Zuko is asking if you can tell him the plan. He's a little nervous about his ship.

TAGA
Aang and I are able to harness the winds to our purposes. Air is powerful, but I'm afraid it's ephemeral and impossible to predict. I know it's hard to be patient, but I will only know what to do when we get there.

KATARA
Right, but with all due respect, my friends and I have been on several missions together, and things usually work out better when we have a clearer plan.

Aang pulls Katara aside.

AANG
(to Katara)
You have to understand, this is the way Air Nomads are. It's all kind of free-flowing.

TAGA
Like the winds themselves!

AANG
Like the winds! Look, Taga and I are going to work together -- the power of two Airbenders!

Katara's not sure.

KATARA
I know, it's just usually you're with us, while we're getting prepared.

AANG
Taga and I got this. Really. Trust me.

Property of Paramount Animation

Katara puts her hand on Aang's chest.

KATARA
I do.

Katara heads off, leaving Aang a bit wistful for her company.

TAGA
They haven't seen how powerful our element can be when Airbenders work together.

AANG
They've never known a world with Air Nomads.

TAGA
The Air Nomads were the best scientists, the best artists, the best craftsmen. The best warriors, when we had to be. We were at the center of the world.

AANG
I wish I could've seen it.

TAGA
That's not all we could do... Take my hand, brother.

Aang looks curiously at Taga. Taga smiles.

SEQUENCE 2150 AANG AND TAGA FLY

EXT. THE OPEN OCEAN, SKIES ABOVE, CLOUDS - MOMENTS LATER

ON a thick layer of cloud cover. A few sea birds.

AANG (O.C.)
... aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaahhh...

AND THEN AANG AND TAGA BURST THROUGH THE CLOUD COVER!

AANG (CONT'D)
(face in wild joy)
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!

- Aang and Taga fly together!

TAGA
Now you lift me!

Property of Paramount Animation

- Each buffets the other with a gust of air when the other appears to be slowing down!

TAGA (CONT'D)
AND I LIFT YOU!

- The effect is that they both appear to increase in speed, going faster and faster!

- Their voices are distorted with the DOPPLER EFFECT!

TAGA (CONT'D)
Sonam created this technique along with Shared Breath! Two airbenders together!

- The world BLUUUURRRRRRRSZZZZ!

TAGA (CONT'D)
She thought we could reach the speed of light someday!

- They reach an inevitable...

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP, DECK - DAY

... VOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM! SONIC BOOM!

Katara, Toph, Sokka, Zuko, Appa, and Momo watch AANG AND TAGA STREAKING ACROSS THE SKY!

EXT. THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE - DAY/NIGHT

Aang and Taga have reached THE LIMIT BETWEEN EARTH AND OUTER SPACE. They hang in orbit, enveloped in SPHERES OF AIR.

Aang looks out in wonder at celestial bodies; he looks down and sees the Earth, with its particular AVATAR PANGEA -- a stunning sight.

TAGA
... she wanted us to reach the stars...

OFF Aang, eyes filled with unspeakable joy and wonder--

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - BRIDGE - DAY

ON Katara, looking up as the vapor trails from Aang and Taga's flight begin to feather apart.

Property of Paramount Animation

KATARA
(re: the vapor trails)
... he's flying... He's experiencing all these things he's never gotten a chance to experience before. He just needed another Airbender. That's what he's needed this whole time.

Meanwhile, Zuko is checking his instruments while Sokka uses a sextant to find their location on an ocean chart.

ZUKO
I just wish Taga'd talk to us a little more. I mean I know they have a lot to catch up on, but we're all the way out here on his say-so.

KATARA
We have to give them time.

The wind starts to pick up.

TOPH
I feel the air trembling.

Toph grabs her ears.

TOPH (CONT'D)
Gah! You all feel that pressure change?

The airship hovers through the thick clouds, and in the distance, flashes of lightning illuminate the sky.

A bolt strikes near Sokka startling him.

The clouds become thicker, visibility is becoming compromised.

Toph notices the rain beginning to fall, each drop hitting the wheelhouse window one by one. Soon, the rain intensifies, pouring over the airship.

The flag on the front of the ship that signaled air current direction begins flapping in all directions. It's impossible to discern the direction the wind is blowing.

ZUKO
Aang and Taga better get back soon. I've completely lost our heading.

Property of Paramount Animation

SOKKA
(looking at his chart)
I think we need to turn around.
Because if this is right...

KATARA
(complete dread)
Sokka...

Zuko, Katara, and Sokka look up to see the IMMORTAL STORM, a gigantic maelstrom that's the size of a small country rising from the horizon! The wind starts to pick up!

SOKKA
...we're headed into the Immortal Storm.

Zuko loses his sense of direction as the airship meanders through the heavy clouds. Lightning strikes closer and closer to the airship.

Inside the cargo hold, light lamps dangle from the ceiling. Appa and Momo huddle, holding their breath, as the airship experiences turbulence.

Katara runs to the front of the deck. She scans the surroundings in search of Aang. Aang and Taga are nowhere within sight. Katara shouts-

KATARA
AAAAANG!

Zuko and Katara look over the bow and see that the skies are full of multiple tornadoes that swirl around one massive spiraling storm that's the size of a small continent.

ZUKO
We're being pulled in!

ON Zuko, staring into the DARK MAW OF A STORM that will almost certainly tear the airship apart!

ZUKO (CONT'D)
Everyone to your stations! NOW!

EXT. THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE - DAY/NIGHT

Quiet. Peaceful. Serene. Nothing but the sound of breathing as Aang and Taga look out on to the Earth, looking so beautiful.

Property of Paramount Animation

AANG
Makes me want to stay up here forever.

TAGA
Just wait until you see what happens when there are even more Airbenders with which to fly.

AANG
I can't even imagine. Hey, how did Sonam pick you?

TAGA
Hm?

AANG
Why were you the non-bender that she gave powers to?

TAGA
I was her most devout pupil, the one who fully embodied the spirit of being an Air Nomad.

Aang nods and smiles.

AANG
I'm very grateful to you for showing me all of these things.

TAGA
My brother. I would do anything for a fellow Air Nomad. I feel grateful to have awoken to find you.

AANG
It makes me see how much I never knew I lost.

TAGA
Aang, may I ask you something?

AANG
Of course.

TAGA
If the Fire Nation wiped out all the Air Nomads but you, how could you be friends with the Fire Lord?

Property of Paramount Animation

AANG
Zuko is a good friend. That wasn't always the case, but without his help, I could never have defeated his father and ended the war.

TAGA
He wears the crown himself now. Things can change.

AANG
That's why we stick together. That's why we listen to each other. That's why we built Republic City, to show that we can all live together.

TAGA
Republic City. In my time, it was the Earthbenders of the city, our own neighbors who turned against us.

AANG
I know there's a risk that things will go badly, but what's the alternative? When everyone just stuck to their own, the whole world went to war. And besides, Katara, Sokka, Zuko, Toph, they're my family. I want to live in a world where we can all be together.

Taga regards Aang, seeing his leadership qualities.

TAGA
I can see how you inspire hope that that world might be possible.

Aang looks back down at the swirling clouds. He notices they've turned stormy.

AANG
We should really get back.

Aang and Taga drop out of orbit and start to head back down into the Immortal Storm.

SEQUENCE 2250 IMMORTAL STORM

Property of Paramount Animation

EXT. THE IMMORTAL STORM - RAGING WINDS - DAY

A storm with clouds so dense that it nearly blocks out the sun. Lightning, terrible winds. FIND the Fire Nation Airship fighting against raging, and deafening winds.

INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - SAME

An especially powerful bolt of lightning strikes the crows nest, then travels down and ripples electricity throughout the balloon. It ripples past Katara climbing a ladder inside the ship's hatch. She momentarily looses her grip, shocked by the lightning's current, and tumbles down a few rungs, but catches herself only to see-- The steam engine explodes and sparks spew out of the balloon igniting small fires that quickly grow. The back of the airship is slowly burning.

INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Zuko is at the wheel, struggling against the violent winds, trying to keep the ship straight.

ZUKO
Where the heck are Aang and Taga?!

Suddenly the ship loses a large amount of thrust and the whirring of machinations slow to a low hum. Something's wrong. He checks the gears. Pressure gears are plummeting. All thrust is gone. And now, they are beginning to lose altitude. He sees the clouds before him begin to rise up in his cockpit view as they slowly descend. He grabs the ship's loudspeaker and shouts into it.

ZUKO (CONT'D)
We're losing altitude! We're going down!

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Sokka and Toph struggle to stay upright as the airship sways violently back-and-forth from the winds.

ZUKO
(over loudspeaker)
Sokka! I need you in the wheelhouse!...Toph, Katara, meet me inside the stern balloon!

Toph and Sokka each take off heading carefully, but urgently towards their destinations.

Property of Paramount Animation

EXT. THE IMMORTAL STORM - SKIES ABOVE - CONTINUOUS

Aang and Taga continue to free fall to where they thought they left the airship. In the vast expanse of the sky and clouds, they struggle to locate their friends.

AANG
Where are they?!

They continue searching as they skydive, scanning the expansive skies in the hope of spotting their lost friends.

INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - STERN BALLOON - CONTINUOUS

Zuko, Katara, and Toph arrive to see a large hole in the ship's balloon that is slowly spreading. Hot air rapidly escapes and rain water pours in, seeping into the engine works.

ZUKO
Katara, stop that rain! Toph, metal bend those beams together! We need to close that hole!

Zuko rushes out, heading toward the engine room. Katara uses some of the nearby pooled rainwater to boost herself up and out of the hole in the balloon.

On top of the balloon, Katara uses waterbending to seal her feet to the balloon with ice. Then she starts to create a barrier, stopping the water from entering the hole. The water pools in a large shield just above the hole.

Now Toph steps in and begins metalbending two large metal structures together, stretching the balloon to pinch closed the damaged area. It's a slow process, but she's closing the gap.

Elsewhere on the ship, Appa and Momo cower, frightened by the lightning and thunder. Momo tries to hide in Appa's fur. Appa tries to hide but he's much too large, nothing can cover him.

INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - ENGINE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Zuko arrives in the engine room and inspects it. The coal is soaked with rainwater and he notices a busted pipe attached to one of the boilers. He grabs a piece a cloth and wraps it around one hand, gripping the steel pipe, and super heating it with firebending from his other hand. He pulls hard to bend it back into place and form a temporary weld.

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INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sokka tries to steer the ship around rogue tornadoes, but can't help but notice they have lowered beneath the cloud cover. Turbulent ocean waters await them below if they continue to descend at this rate. Sokka grabs the loudspeaker.

SOKKA
Zuko? Toph? Can I get an update?

Suddenly he spots another oncoming whirlwind. He drops the loudspeaker and makes a sharp turn.

INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - STERN BALLOON - CONTINUOUS

Katara is jostled and loses focus. The water falls into the remaining open balloon hole.

Toph is hit by the water and knocked over, interrupting her metalbending.

EXT. THE IMMORTAL STORM, SKIES ABOVE - CONTINUOUS

Aang and Taga continue to descend. They're much closer to the storm at this point. Aang frantically scans the clouds.

Finally, he sees it. The ship is in trouble and drops beneath the clouds just as soon as Aang gets eyes on it. Aang looks to Taga.

AANG
This way!

Aang turns his body and skydives in a high speed arc to where he saw the ship disappear.

Aang and Taga dive into and through the clouds, emerging on the other side just over the top of the descending balloon. They quickly airbend to slow their descent and land hard atop the balloon near Katara.

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - TOP OF THE BALLOON - CONTINUOUS

Aang and Taga immediately get to work using their bending to help in any way they can. Aang runs over to assist Katara and takes over waterbending for her, but Katara is not Aang's biggest fan at the moment.

KATARA
What were you thinking?!

Property of Paramount Animation

AANG
Thinking?

KATARA
You left us here to fly into a storm! The ship is falling to pieces!

AANG
Katara... I--

But she doesn't want to hear it. She runs to the hatch and heads back down to the main ship leaving Aang to think about what he did. As Katara disappears into the hatch, Aang sees Taga in the distance, assessing the situation.

He looks out at the multitudes of swirling whirlwinds before them.

TAGA
Only an Airbender could pass through this storm.

A tornado is approaching dangerously close to the ship.

WHEELHOUSE: Sokka tries to turn the ship in time.

TOP OF BALLOON: The tornado approaches even closer. Taga turns to Aang.

TAGA (CONT'D)
(to Aang)
Follow my lead. I'll show you the way.

TAGA steps forward and leaps from the ship flying directly into the whirlwind.

AANG
Taga! No!

Aang stops waterbending and runs toward Taga, can only watch in fear as Taga skydives directly into the tornado.

INT. TORNADO - CONTINUOUS

Taga rides the tornado around and around as it lifts him up toward the top of the spiral of air. He tries to steady himself, and he begins to airbend in a circular motion, turning his hand motions the opposite direction of the storm winds. It seems futile.

WHEELHOUSE: Sokka pulls hard on the wheel.

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The glass of the wheelhouse windows begin to crack.

SOKKA
It’s pulling us in!

The ship begins to lurch forward.

Back in the tornado with Taga: He ascends high above the center of the tornado's eye, finding an unexpected calm center spot in the midst of chaos. With a purposeful fall into the tornado’s eye, Taga uses his powerful airbending to spin in the opposite direction, successfully countering the tornado's force.

INT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP, WHEELHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ZUKO and SOKKA suddenly witness the tornado disperse and the ship passes through unscathed. They watch as Taga skydives out, headed for another tornado. He’s clearing a path.

SOKKA
It’s about freaking time!
(into loudspeaker)
Hey everyone! Aang’s back!

ENGINE ROOM: Zuko is still in the engine room, wiping sweat from his brow as he furiously firebends into the furnace. He’s already fixed the burst pipe and is trying to dry out the wet coal. Steam billows past him but the coal doesn’t ignite. He mutters to himself.

ZUKO
This is some messed up Airbender non-plan...

TOP OF BALLOON: Back up top of the ballon, Aang watches as Taga enters the next oncoming tornado. Aang is beaming from ear to ear. He’s never seen one person be so amazing. Inspired by Taga’s heroics, Aang dives off the top of the fire nation airship and heads for the next tornado in the ships path.

- Katara sees Aang heading toward a tornado. She looks on concerned for a moment before getting back to work.

- Aang passes Taga’s tornado and dives into the next one, riding the winds to the top, just like Taga did, and reaching the top. At the peak, Aang taps into the Avatar state, unleashing a powerful surge of airbending that destroys the tornado.

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- We intercut between Aang and Taga. Navigating from one tornado to another, Aang and Taga leap between them to neutralize the threat. They disperse each tornado just in the knick of time before the Fire Nation airship passes through. But the ship continues to slowly descend.

STERN BALLON INTERIOR: Toph finally fully closes the gap with her metalbending.

ENGINE ROOM: Zuko continues to firebend into the furnace. It still hasn't ignited.

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Katara rushes toward the front of the ship and sees the ocean coming up to meet them as the ship descends. Katara steadies herself, takes a deep breath, and pulls strength from the deepest regions within her body. She deepens her stance and begins to waterbend the ocean! She parts the waves creating a pocket so that the ship doesn't collide with the water! Like Moses parting the Red Sea, the ship slowly ducks under the ocean's surface passing into the alleyway that Katara has created. The airship maneuvers between two giant ocean walls.

At that crucial moment, Zuko exerts a final push of his firebending, burning all the coals and reigniting the engine!

As Katara exerts herself to hold the ocean back, the ship slowly begins to rise again. We see the strain this action is taking on Katara, but she won't give up! And in one final action, Katara freezes the water directly in front of them into a ramp that helps turn the ship upward and sends it up above the ocean's surface just in time! Katara releases the ocean and falls to one knee, exhausted. The ocean collapses and crashes together as the ship soars back up into the sky.

Aang disperses the last tornado, clearing the way.

But then he notices the swirling wall of wind of the final and last massive tornado -- THE IMMORTAL STORM ITSELF.

Aang and Taga head back to the ship to regroup, landing near Katara. Zuko and Toph arrive with Sokka in the wheelhouse.

AANG
How do we neutralize that one, Taga?

TAGA
We don't. We go through.

KATARA
What?!

Property of Paramount Animation

The airship is already impacted and affected by the powerful turbulence, getting pulled further into the heart of the storm. The characters shout to each other over the winds and through broken windows.

ZUKO
We have to turn around!

TAGA
No! We continue! STRAIGHT AHEAD!

SOKKA
There's no way we're making it through that!

ZUKO
That's suicide!

TAGA
Then stay in your wheelhouse, Fire Lord. Let the airbenders handle this!

Aang is torn. He looks from his friends to Taga, realizing the conflict. Katara sees Aang's indecision.

KATARA
Aang! We have to turn back!

Aang thinks one moment longer, then--

AANG
Head into the storm!

Taga smiles. Aang has chosen his side.

The friends are incredibly frustrated and disappointed. Katara can't believe how far Aang has gone.

Zuko looks at Aang with a look of concern, but he listens to his friend and steers forward, muttering to himself...

ZUKO
I hope you know what you're doing, Aang.

Through the WINDOWS OF THE WHEELHOUSE, Zuko and Sokka's POV shows us the wall of wind ahead!

SOKKA
We're dead...

The Fire Nation frigate starts to get pulled in and it veers to the side, following the flow of air.

Property of Paramount Animation

Sokka ties himself and Toph down.

The winds enter the wheelhouse and pull on Sokka and Toph but they hold onto the railings with all their might.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
AAAAHHHH!

Zuko holds fast to the wheel digging his feet into the ground.

EXT. THE IMMORTAL STORM - WALL OF THE STORM - CONTINUOUS

The Fire Nation Airship goes faster and faster...

...IT'S RIDING THE AIR STREAM, LIKE THE TURTLES IN FINDING NEMO!

We get deeper toward the SWIRLING CENTER OF THE STORM.

Slight glimpses of light flash through the storm along the side of the ship, as if we can momentarily see salvation on the other side of this wall of wind and rain.

Taga points out the EYE OF THE STORM.

TAGA
There! That's the eye! That's where we're headed!

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - DECK - CONTINUOUS

Zuko (following the direction Taga points) turns into the wall of the storm.

Sokka, Katara, Toph, Appa, and Momo brace themselves against the G-forces of their spiral!

SOKKA
WHAAAAAATTTT THEEE...

The EDGE OF THE STORM RUSHES OVER TO MEET THEM -- it's too fast! The ship starts to get spun around!

Taga rushes to the rear of the ship and airbends one final massive... WHOOSH! Taga pushes the Fire Nation Airship clear of the storm.

Suddenly they emerge from the high winds into a thick fog. The air is much more calm, and they leave the frantic swirling winds of the raging storm behind.

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AANG
Everybody alright?

Sokka pokes his head up, still shaking.

SOKKA
Ahem--
(deep bass)
I'm good up here.

SEQUENCE 2375 LION TURTLE ISLANDS

EXT. EYE OF THE STORM - CLEAR SKIES - CONTINUOUS

We see the Fire Nation Airship pushes from stormy, turbid winds into calm, sun-kissed, clear skies.

EXT. EYE OF THE STORM - FIRE NATION AIRSHIP - CONTINUOUS

Now that the storm is in the distance and we're in flat, calm waters again Toph releases the metal lashings. She, Sokka, Zuko and Katara rise, soaking wet.

They're pissed, but then something emerges as the fog clears and sunlight emerges. At first blush it seems like we're looking at A SERIES OF TROPICAL ISLANDS, but upon closer inspection, we see that the islands are actually... THE SKELETONS, FANGS AND SHELLS OF GIANT CREATURES -- THE ANCIENT LION TURTLES!

Taga steps up and stands next to Aang. They look on the scene together.

TAGA
The ancient Lion Turtles were the beings who first gave the gift of bending to humans. These are their final resting grounds. This is where Sonam came to learn how they could bend the energy inside a person. I am certain that she left her Energy Staff on one of these islands.

AANG
Which one?

TAGA
I'm not sure exactly. Come. Let's start to look together.

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SOKKA
Hey, Aang, before you do that, can we talk?

AANG
About what?

SOKKA
About... well, maybe we should think things through before we go off and look for this Energy Staff.

AANG
What do you mean?

ZUKO
We all think it might be time to think about slowing down a little, making a better plan.

AANG
Airbending and improvising is what got us through the storm.

ZUKO
I mean, I'm a head of state. I almost died up there. That would have been, like... bad.

TOPH
And, I mean, I'm usually up for anything, but even I'm thinking that what we're doing right now might be a little... this is all moving a little too fast.

AANG
Too fast? We can't bring Air Nomads back fast enough if you ask me! Katara...!

Katara doesn't know what to say. She's clearly still hurt by Aang's actions.

TAGA
Friends. Please. I think this might all be my fault.

AANG
No, Taga, this is not-

TAGA
(to Aang)
No, Aang. Please, let me speak.
(MORE)

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TAGA (CONT'D)
(to Team Avatar)
You must understand -- in my time, the world was in a period of great strife. I lost many people I cared about. It can be difficult for me to trust; it can be difficult for me to communicate and... cooperate. But, Aang has shared your vision for what you want the world to be. I feel strongly compelled to assist in the return of my people. I want to help.

Beat.

TOPH
I forgive you!

Toph takes Taga by the arm.

AANG
(to Team Avatar)
See? We're here. We can get the Energy Staff and then we can keep talking about what we're going to do together, alright?

Nervous looks amongst Zuko, Toph, and Sokka. They aren't sure how to respond. Then--

KATARA
Alright. Thank you, Taga. We're all happy you're here. If you get to know us a little, I think you'll see that you can trust us.

TAGA
I can feel that.

AANG
So that's settled. Where should we start looking?

TAGA
Sonam may have been an Air Nomad, but she incorporated all the elements in her meditations and practices. We should look for a place where all the elements are in abundance and easily accessible.

AANG
Then we should search from the sky.

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TAGA
I think that would be wise. And... I think I should stay here. It's time that I became acquainted with my new friends. I have a feeling we're going to be spending quite a bit of time together.

AANG
Yeah. That's great!
(to Team Avatar)
See?

Aang gestures to the beautiful landscape around him.

AANG (CONT'D)
Look at where we are! Think about what we might be able to accomplish today. I'm so happy that we're here together.

And with that he takes off on Appa.

SEQUENCE 2475 SEARCH FOR SONAM'S STAFF

EXT. EYE OF THE STORM - CLEAR SKIES - CONTINUOUS

ON Aang, climbing up into the sky on Appa's back. He reaches a high place where he is able to get an incredible aerial view of the scene.

Below him, he sees the LION TURTLE GRAVEYARD/ARCHIPELAGO as well as the Immortal Storm that surrounds everything.

Aang sees something in the distance.

AANG
Wait. What's that?

Beneath him he sees ANOTHER AIRBENDER using her glider to land on one of the lion turtles.

A CLOUD blows in front of her, obscuring Aang's vision. When it clears, she's gone. Was it just a mirage?

Aang flies down to the island where he saw her. As he gets closer, he hears a delicate TINKLING.

Property of Paramount Animation

EXT. SONAM'S ISLAND - DAY

Aang lands Appa nearby, gets off and approaches the sound. Aang sees ANCIENT GLASS WIND CHIMES with Airbender symbols on them.

AANG
Sonam must have left them here.

He looks around and sees a little waterfall trickling over some rocks.

AANG (CONT'D)
Water, earth, air...

Suddenly the WIND STOPS. Everything is preternaturally still and silent.

A SUNBEAM hits one of the chimes, refracting down on some dry leaves. A line of smoke emerges and POOF! They burst into flame.

AANG (CONT'D)
Fire.

SEQUENCE 2525 CONFRONTING TAGA

EXT. LION TURTLE ISLAND - BEACH - DAY

The airship is on the beach of the archipelago and the characters are disembarked, setting up a makeshift camp.

Taga turns toward the forest. Looking for something.

KATARA (O.S.)
Hey, Taga.

TAGA
(turning to her)
Yes.

Katara gestures behind her and we can see Zuko, Toph, and Sokka sitting on the beach with a tray of food ready for lunch.

KATARA
I, uhm, I realized that you haven't had much more than a cup of tea since you woke up. And, it's been 5,000 years...

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TAGA
Thank you. I'm starving.

KATARA
Good. And we have a vegetarian meal in your honor.

TAGA
I am very grateful.

KATARA
And can I make a request?

TAGA
Of course.

KATARA
Can you sit next to Toph? She kind of begged me to ask.

TAGA
I'd be delighted.

KATARA
Thank you. Listen, I wanted to say that I'm sorry I haven't made you feel more welcome. It's just that Aang is very important to me, important to all of us, and... well, I'd hate for you to ever think that anyone from the Southern Water Tribe would forget their manners when meeting a stranger.

TAGA
Of course. It's all been very understandable. And, it's a two-way street.

KATARA
I'm so glad to hear you say that because... well, because we have a lot of questions about this "Energy Staff" that we're looking for.

TAGA
Mm-hm.

KATARA
It sounds like it was very powerful.

Taga looks toward the forest. He spots something and walks over closer to it.

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KATARA (CONT'D)
Like what else can it do besides give people bending? What could happen if the wrong person got a hold of it?

Taga strikes an airbending pose.

KATARA (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

Taga AIRBENDS into the forest, awakening a RUSTLING SOUND.

Suddenly a MONITOR COBRA comes barreling out of the woods, ready to fight. It's a big lizard with a long neck and a frightening cobra hood around its head.

Taga LEAPS out of its way and it charges straight for Katara, Taga, and the picnicking crew.

KATARA (CONT'D)
Guys, we got a problem!

Katara WATERBENDS FIGHTING APPENDAGES on to her arms. Katara looks back for Taga.

KATARA (CONT'D)
Taga?!

He's gone. The cobra is about to attack the team. Not having time to worry about Taga, Katara runs to defend her friends.

SEQUENCE 2550 FINDING SONAM'S GROTTO

EXT. SONAM'S ISLAND - JUNGLE - DAY

Aang sees something behind the waterfall -- something that gleams in the sunlight. Aang waterbends the waterfall apart to reveal a GROTTO.

Inside the Grotto, there is a GOLDEN DOOR.

AANG
An Avatar lock.

EXT. LION TURTLE ISLAND - BEACH - DAY

Katara, Zuko, Toph, Sokka, and Momo face off against the Cobra-Monitor. It caught them by surprise and they're backed up against the beach.

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Toph tries to earthbend at it but--

TOPH
I can't do anything in all this sand!

Zuko firebends at it but it blocks his strikes with its big hood and otherwise is too fast to hit. This thing is agile, mobile and hostile.

Every time Katara tries to get in a waterbending stance it nips at her, keeping her jumping.

KATARA
I can't get set to strike.

SOKKA
Where's Taga?

KATARA
He made this thing attack and ran off!

SOKKA
What?

TOPH
That beautiful traitor.

ZUKO
He's going after Aang.

The lizard lunges again and they barely evade it.

TOPH
We need to get to higher ground.

SOKKA
You guys cover me, I'll run to the airship.

Sokka runs for the ship while everyone tries to hold off the lizard. It sees Sokka's movement and strikes, but he's too far away--

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Ha-ha!

Then THE COBRA SPITS!

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Aaah!

Property of Paramount Animation

He hits the ground and the nasty poison hits a palm tree behind him, instantly withering it to gooey ash.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Ewww!

KATARA
Sokka, go!

Sokka takes off again.

RETURN TO:

INT. SONAM'S ISLAND - GROTTO - DAY

Aang firebends a torch for himself. Aang brings his torch up to the door and illuminates ancient writings that have been etched into the stone.

AANG
(reading)
Sonam made this door so that only an Avatar could open it.

Aang looks at the floor of the Grotto to reveal MARKINGS ON THE GROUND.

Aang positions himself in the center of the markings on the ground.

He begins to draw all the surrounding elements of water, earth, fire, and air to him.

TRULY AANG IS AN AMAZING SIGHT TO BEHOLD RIGHT NOW--

SEQUENCE 2950 MONSTER ATTACK

EXT. LION TURTLE ISLAND - AIRSHIP - DAY

Sokka has made it to the airship and now pilots it over towards his friends. He pulls the ship right above them.

KATARA
There he is. Toph, straight up!

Toph earthbends herself up and Zuko follows with his fire jets, helping to direct her into the ship. Katara follows with her waterbending as the lizard makes one last LUNGE AND SPIT at her.

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She manages to bend the spit back in its face and the lizard HOWLS and falls.

Katara lands in the ship with the others.

TOPH
Did we make it out?

SOKKA
I think so.

The team takes a relieved breath, but then Sokka sees something below.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Oh, yeah, of course...

Everyone looks down and sees the monitor creature spreading its wings.

TOPH
What is it? What's happening?

KATARA
(deadpan)
It has wings.

The lizard flaps up into the sky after them and BAM! It lands hard on their balloon and starts tearing at it like a melon it can't wait to crack open to get to the deliciousness inside.

Everyone inside is rocked!

RETURN TO:

EXT. SONAM'S ISLAND - GROTTO - DAY

- AANG DIRECTS ALL OF THE ELEMENTS INTO THE AVATAR LOCK. The lock is designed as such that all of the elements need to emanate from a single point, a group of benders could not accomplish this task.

- The machinery of the Avatar lock begins to move, albeit slowly.

- AANG INCREASES HIS POWER, pushing more elements through the lock.

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EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP, DECK - DAY

The lizard sits on top of the ship, tearing at it with its talons, looking for the people it was chasing. As it does, it's poking holes in the balloon and bending the beams.

ZUKO
We have to get that thing off of there!

The lizard cocks his head, hearing his voice.

In the gondola, Sokka is freaking out.

SOKKA
How are we supposed to get a giant lizard off the top of the balloon? HOW?!

Then he sees its big head on its snaky neck looking in on them. Found you!

KATARA
That did it.

The lizard ROARS at them and then SPITS, dissolving through their windows and some of the control panel.

The balloon starts to veer out of control.

Zuko starts firing at it as the giant lizard SNAPS at them.

Toph tries to repair some of the metal girders.

TOPH
It's tearing the structure apart.

ZUKO
Get off of my ship!

The ship is crumbling to pieces from the attack and drifting away from the islands.

RETURN TO:

EXT. SONAM'S ISLAND - GROTTO - DAY

Aang has spent all of his bending powers and falls exhausted to the floor.

But it was just enough because THE DOOR SIGHS OPEN.

CUT TO:

Property of Paramount Animation

SEQUENCE 3000 AIRSHIP DESTROYED

EXT. FIRE NATION AIRSHIP, DECK - DAY

The lizard keeps attacking the control room.

TOPH
All right, enough.

She rips a girder and a panel out of the floor, like a bat and a shield.

ZUKO
Now *you're* tearing up my ship?

TOPH
Get! Get!

She starts hitting the lizard in the head, driving it out of the control room.

As it backs up outside, she uses her metalbending to keep herself attached to the hull.

Meanwhile, the ship is still veering out of control. Sokka and Zuko furiously try to fix the control panel.

SOKKA
We have to get steering back or we're going to drift straight into the storm.

Katara gets an idea.

KATARA
Let it go into the storm.

ZUKO
What?

KATARA
It's the only way!

TOPH
(from outside)
What?!

KATARA
Toph, get ready to jump!

The ship starts getting sucked toward the wall of the Immortal Storm.

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Everyone climbs out. The lizard doesn't notice the storm wall, it just keeps attacking. It SPITS at Toph and her little shield melts, burning her.

TOPH
Aah!

She tosses it aside. The lizard thinks it has them just where it wants them. As it snaps its massive jaws at them--

KATARA
Now!

Everyone LEAPS off the ship.

The lizard sees them trying to get away and starts flapping its huge wings to give chase, but the ship is getting sucked into the storm and its perch is unsteady, moving backward.

Before the beast can launch, it's caught in the powerful draft of the storm and no amount of flapping can pull it out. It gives a final SCREAM as it falls backward into the gyre and ZIP it's gone.

Meanwhile our heroes SPLASH into the churning seas, disappearing under the waves.

SEQUENCE 2850 TAGA REVEALED

INT. SONAM'S ISLAND - VAULT - DAY

Aang steps into a quiet somber room and sees the ENERGY STAFF, bathed in an glowing field.

AANG
There it is.

He steps up to it with great solemnity. Aang reaches out to take the Energy Staff, but suddenly--

AANG'S EYES WIDEN! He clutches his throat - he can't breathe!

Aang turns to see Taga standing in the doorway, hand outstretched -- Taga is airbending the oxygen out of Aang's lungs! Aang tries to reach out to airbend for himself, but-

TAGA
Oh no. Don't do that.

Taga sends A GUST OF WIND THAT KNOCKS AANG INTO A WALL! All Aang can do now is grab his own throat in fear and horror!

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TAGA (CONT'D)
Sonam was a lot like you -- or I should say that you are a lot like Sonam.

Taga grabs the Energy Staff for himself and WE CAN SEE THE ENERGY FLOW FROM THE STAFF INTO HIS BODY.

The color of the staff's energy turns from A BEAUTIFUL AVATAR BLUE TO A SICKLY GREEN.

TAGA (CONT'D)
You both build a culture of weakness and wonder why it dies. Let me ask, what would you have done if you had been there when the Fire Nation attacked? Run?

Taga strides over to him, ready to finish the job.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Your foolish doctrine of nonviolence cost us everything. And now, even though you are the last Airbender, you refuse to change. Can't you understand that the only thing that matters is survival?

Taga, Dark Power coursing through his veins, drives Aang down to his knees!

TAGA (CONT'D)
I'm going back to Jharana to create a new Air Nation, a home where Airbenders will finally be safe and protected from the other nations.

THE WORLD STARTS TO GO DARK!

TAGA (CONT'D)
Unfortunately that means your Republic City will have to be removed.

The light goes out from Aang's eyes. What?! Seriously? He's dead? Sure looks like it. Taga releases Aang and lets his corpse topple to the ground.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Good-bye, Avatar. It's so sad how history keeps repeating itself. When will we learn?

Taga steps over Aang's lifeless body and heads out into...

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EXT. SONAM'S ISLAND - GROTTO - DAY

Taga steps out of Sonam's Room and ROOOOOAAAAR! Taga finds AN ANGRY AND SNORTING APPA standing in the waterfall.

TAGA
(calm)
... whoa... whoa...

ROOOOOAAARR! SNOORRRRRTTTT!

TAGA (CONT'D)
...whoa...that's a good air bison...

SNOOOORRRRRT!

TAGA (CONT'D)
...that's a good air bison...

APPA CHARGES TOWARD TAGA, TEETH BARED TO ATTACK!

Taga whips out the silk bindings that Katara had back on the ship, and quickly releases them with airbending, like an Air Nomad cowboy. He lassos Appa and ties him with a makeshift bridle and reins, flipping himself up on Appa's back.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Now I'll show you how I broke my old bison to my will.

He spurs Appa hard in the ribs. Appa BELLOWS.

Appa REARS BACK, trying to throw Taga, but Taga AIRSLAPS Appa in the ears, knocking him silly. Appa ROARS.

TAGA (CONT'D)
You see who the master is now?

He tightens and tugs the reins, and Appa twists his head up, dizzily flying into the sky.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Come! We have work to do!

Taga sends A TERRIBLE TORNADO spinning towards the doorway to Sonam's Room, completely collapsing the entrance and blowing a hole in the waterfall, burying Aang alive. Then he flies off to wreck havoc on the world!

3100 THE TEAM REGROUPS

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EXT. SONAM'S ISLAND - GROTTO - DAY

AANG AWAKENS AND FINDS THAT HE'S BEEN BURIED IN SAND AND RUBBLE. He can't move to bend and more rubble is falling all around him!

He struggles and struggles, but it's no use. He... can't... move!

Death feels eminent, but will it be via rising water, or falling boulders?!

Just as it appears that hope is lost, THE WALLS OF THE ROOM OPEN UP courtesy of Toph -- Team Avatar has come to rescue him!

TOPH
He's here! In here!

Toph, Katara and Zuko bend back the lava, water and boulders.

SOKKA
(to Aang)
I've got you!

Sokka grabs Aang and they all bolt away just as the entire room collapses.

AANG (PRE-LAP)
AAAPPPPPAAAAAAAA!

EXT. LION TURTLE ISLAND - BEACH - NIGHT

ON a beach, FIND Katara, Zuko, Toph and Sokka looking out over the water.

Everyone sits on the beach, utterly defeated. Their ship is gone, Appa has been stolen. They're marooned.

Aang, ankle deep in water yelling at the sky.

AANG
(hoarse)
Apppaaaaa! Here, boy! Appaa!

Aang coughs, still exhausted from his ordeal.

EXT. LION TURTLE ISLAND, WATER - CONTINUOUS

ON Aang, coughing. He shakes his head, trying to slough off the pain.

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AANG
AAPPPPPAAAAAA!

Katara walks up behind him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

KATARA
Aang.

Aang goes to his knees.

AANG
If he hears me, he might come back.

KATARA
I don't think so.

TOPH
Taga probably has him on the other side of the storm by now. He totally played us.

AANG
I can't believe he betrayed me like that! I feel like such an idiot!

ZUKO
You let yourself believe what you wanted to believe. He couldn't be bad, because he's an Airbender.

SOKKA
Where do you think he's going?

AANG
(quietly)
Republic City.

KATARA
What?!

AANG
He's going to Republic City to destroy it, and rebuild his air nation.

Everyone looks at him. This is getting worse all the time.

KATARA
We've got to get back there.

SOKKA
How?! Appa is gone and our ship got sucked into that massive typhoon surrounding us!

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TOPH
Well we're not going to get back by belly-aching about it.

SOKKA
Then how?

Everyone slumps for a moment, thinking.

KATARA
We could never build a ship strong enough to make it back through the storm.

TOPH
I'm done with ships. Let's build a bridge.

Zuko chuckles.

ZUKO
Then we could just walk across the Endless Ocean. Should only take a few years.

Aang PERKS UP.

AANG
Wait, we don't have to build a bridge. I'm right here.

Katara gets it.

KATARA
The bridge between the physical world and the spirit world.

SOKKA
No, no, no... I'm not going into the spirit world. That place is crazy! And doesn't it change all the time? How would we even know where to go?

KATARA
Where *would* we be going?

AANG
I can get us into the spirit world. We just need to find another portal that leads back into the physical world.

Everyone waits for more, but that's it.

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SOKKA
What if the portal spits us out at the North Pole!

ZUKO
Another Airbender non-plan.

AANG
Right now I'm just trying to find some way to stop Taga and save Republic City.

They all trade looks. They're pissed but they still love Aang.

TOPH
We don't all have to meditate to get there, do we?

AANG
No, you won't have to meditate... Just follow me.

CUT TO:

EXT. LION TURTLE ISLAND - BEACH - NIGHT

Time cut to...

ON Aang, Katara, Zuko, Toph, Sokka and Momo, standing on the beach looking out at the water as a large wave begins to approach the shore. Aang has his eyes closed, meditating.

The wave gets closer and closer, growing larger and larger, until THE OCEAN SPIRIT, a massive primordial fish-spirit-beast, emerges from the water and rides the surf towards our team.

SOKKA
(freaking out)
What is that?!

Aang concentrates with his eyes closed, summoning his ancient spirit friend to help them cross over to the spirit world.

AANG
The ocean spirit.

Sokka starts to run away but Toph grabs his hand and won't let him go. Katara stands next to Aang, ready for anything. Zuko is resolved, but we can tell he's still pissed about this whole ride.

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The ocean spirit rides the surf up onto the sand, its MOUTH OPEN WIDE.

TEAM POV: It's like a train entering a tunnel except the train is stopped and the tunnel is flying at them at a high rate of speed and they quickly find themselves in--

SUDDEN DARKNESS as the world shakes and blurs, their surroundings morphing from real world to spirit world.

3200 INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD

EXT. SPIRIT WORLD - DUSK

They slowly collect themselves as they look around the spirit world, which is just as wonderfully trippy as ever.

Literally rolling hills in the distance undulate up and down, changing colors kaleidoscopically as a massive whale swims through the sky above.

SOKKA
Okay... now we're in the spirit world...

He takes a step and WHAAA!

Everyone JUMPS back as the little CLUMP OF GRASS that Sokka stepped on is revealed to be some kind of little fuzzy animal who WHINES and SPINS, whirling up like a fat little helicopter. The noise scares other little Clumpies into loudly taking off and they meander around, bumping into each other in mid-air.

Finally they all stop spinning and settle quietly back into new spots.

Everyone stands silently for a moment.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
(beat)
Things seem pretty much the same here.

Aang pets Momo, who sits on his shoulder, freaking out.

AANG
Everyone just remain calm, try not to disturb anything else, and don't bend unless you really have to. I don't want to agitate the spirits.

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TOPH
Which way do you think should we go?

Suddenly there's a SCREAM from over the rolling hills. The hills turn disturbingly dark and nasty, like a bruise.

SOKKA
I vote the other direction.

A wraithlike DARK SPIRIT comes into view and sees Aang.

DARK SPIRIT
You!

It morphs from a ghostly apparition into A TERRIFYING MONSTER.

DARK SPIRIT (CONT'D)
Youuuuuu!!

ZUKO
I think you agitated the spirits.

The spirit rears back, furious, about to attack.

AANG
Please, let us pass!

Toph quickly earthbends a huge rock at the creature but the spirit shatters the boulder and fires the bits of rock back beneath Toph's feet, turning the ground around her into sand.

TOPH
Ah! What's happening?!

Meanwhile, Zuko and Katara bend fire and water at the dark spirit, but the spirit redirects the attacks into the sky!

AANG
Why are you doing this?! Leave them alone!

Aang airbends at the spirit, but it INHALES his attack and SCREAMS IT BACK in his face, blasting him backward and knocking Momo away from him.

Aang reaches out toward Katara but can't get to her before BOOM! He's hit from the side by the Dark Spirit!

Aang SPLASHES through the sky, which has now become like water, the surface of a lake reflecting the sky.

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He sinks below the surface as the Dark Spirit dives after him! It ignores the others, only chasing Aang.

Aang reaches the sandy bottom of the spirit lake, which transforms into SHIFTING DESERT DUNES.

The Dark Spirit attacks again with the desert wind, and the world seems to fold in around Aang.

The Dark Spirit continues its onslaught. It hits Aang again and again, sending him into various spirit world realms, twisting and spinning, disorienting Aang.

BOOM! He's hit again, BLASTING THROUGH A WALL OF FIRE!

He lands hard on the ground of the grounds of an ancient city. A massive temple stands in the background.

Aang looks around, dizzy. He tries to catch his breath.

But then he hears a SCREAM and footfalls. He turns to see the dark spirit standing before him.

AANG (CONT'D)
What do you want?

DARK SPIRIT
You stole something that was not yours. I want it back!

AANG
That staff belonged to the Avatar, not you.

The Dark Spirit suddenly gets into Aang's face.

DARK SPIRIT
It is not to be trifled with! Where is it?!

AANG
Enough of this!

Aang goes into the Avatar state and ENERGYBENDS at the spirit, trying to contain it.

But it doesn't work. The Dark Spirit pushes him back.

He summons all of his Avatar powers, ENERGYBENDING back at the Dark Spirit, causing the darkness to subside for a moment, revealing a face he recognizes--

AANG (CONT'D)
Avatar Sonam?

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Aang leans close, peering into its eyes.

AANG (CONT'D)
I've been looking for you.

Sonam's face goes in and out of Dark Spirit form as Aang energybends, leaving her in a half-revealed, half-dark energy form. She seems sad now, and scared.

SONAM
I tried to hide. To keep the world out of danger.

He reaches out and TOUCHES HER FACE--

FLASH TO:

EXT. LION TURTLE ISLAND - DAY

Sonam sits in the lotus position where Aang and Taga were. But Sonam FLOATS in place while meditating, shining with power, holding her staff.

SONAM (V.O.)
I spent my life in pursuit of knowledge, unlocking the secrets of the universe.

We fly straight into the THIRD EYE markings on her forehead into--

EXT. ANCIENT AIRBENDER CITY - DAY

Sonam stands on top of her temple with her staff, performing her Qi Gong and generating incredible power.

Her city in its full glory, and Airbenders crowd around the ancient temple, watching.

SONAM (V.O.)
I discovered a way to channel the power of the lion turtles. To create new benders.

A YOUNG TAGA watches from the bottom of the temple, mystified.

SONAM
Taga was my most devout pupil, an exemplary Air Nomad, but without the ability to bend. He would be my first and only creation.

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The power of Sonam's staff SHOOTS INTO TAGA! The BRIGHT LIGHT WIPES TO:

Earth Kingdom troops come MARCHING INTO TOWN.

SONAM (V.O.)
But war was brewing. Our people were slaughtered.

They see the Airbenders and ATTACK -- KILLING THEM!

SONAM (V.O.)
And Taga witnessed it all.

We see Taga running out of the temple, watching the horrible violence.

FLASH TO:

EXT. ANCIENT AIRBENDER CITY - LATER

The city lies in ruin, torn down and still.

SONAM (V.O.)
Pain twisted his heart, and he abandoned our teachings of nonviolence. He wanted to use his bending for force, to build an army and take revenge. I refused.

3300 TRUTH ABOUT TAGA

EXT. ROLLING HILLS - DAWN - PRESENT DAY

Taga rides Appa over empty valleys surrounded by green hills. His eyes track the land as if he's watching something...

Taga looks up ahead. The rolling hills give way to rock formations that jut up sideways from the earth and create huge mountains in the distance.

SONAM (V.O.)
So he stole my staff and used its energy without my knowledge...

EXT. CANYON OF THE BREATH - DAY

Taga lands in the middle of the impressive canyon. Overhead, the enormous rock formations that lined the valley have come together, creating a natural domed roof.

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This is the world's largest wind tunnel.

It's so enormous that it almost feels other-worldly. And the wind here never stops. It whips from the ocean into the Si Wong desert at more than eighty miles per hour.

Taga walks deep into the wind tunnel toward the large exit on the other side, his hair and robes whipping in the wind. He enters--

A HIDDEN CAVE

Taga enters and we see that this place is--

A MEMORIAL TO TAGA AND HIS FALLEN PLATOON.

SONAM (V.O.)
...but his heart was dark, so the energy corrupted him, turning him further toward hate and destruction...

Light streams down through shafts in the ceiling, making dramatic pools on the rocky ground. We can feel that is a mysterious place, full of dark, mystical power.

A DOZEN MASSIVE PILLARS surround the room. ANCIENT CARVINGS on the walls show scenes of their battles with the Earth Kingdom armies of their day. The violence of the past lives on here.

Taga smiles as he runs his hand over a section showing him in a whirlwind, his comrades by his side, destroying a force of Earthbenders ten times their size.

SONAM (V.O.)
...and he created an army that would follow in his footsteps. Others who would use the power for strength. For dominance. For revenge.

He WHIRLS the staff and ENERGY SHOOTS OUT in all directions in a VORTEX of wind.

The whipping wind intensifies and begins to chip away at the STONE PILLARS. The pillars crack and splinter, revealing something glowing beneath their surface.

And trapped within each pillar of energy is an AIRBENDER FROM TAGA'S OLD ARMY!

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The energy disperses now that it is no longer contained by earth, and the ancient Airbenders are free again.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPIRIT WORLD - DAY

Sonam stands before Aang, solemn.

SONAM
I realized too late what I had unleashed.

FLASH TO:

EXT. GRAND TEMPLE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Sonam stands atop her Temple, doing her Qi Gong movements, summoning great spiritual energy.

Sonam's flowing meditation opens up a portal over her head, above the temple.

We can see through the portal the colorful palette and strange creatures of THE SPIRIT WORLD.

She moves into a handstand, and as she does...

THE CAMERA TURNS WITH HER so that she stays right-side-up in the frame until her feet are pointed down at the portal and it's like she's holding the Temple up with her hands.

SONAM (V.O.)
I couldn't bear to destroy my temple, so I hid it in the spirit world and locked away my staff where only an Avatar could ever reach, so that Taga could never access them again.

The Temple is delicately placed next to a BEAUTIFUL SPIRIT WATERFALL that plunges into the ground and transforms into a WAVING GRASSY PLAIN in the way that only dreamlike physics of the spirit world can work.

SONAM (V.O.)
Then I went to confront him.

EXT. BAIHU MOUNTAIN - DAY

Sonam and Taga battle on a SNOWY MOUNTAIN PEAK.

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SONAM (V.O.)
I managed to trap his followers, but Taga had become so powerful that I used the last of my life force to imprison him on the top of that mountain.

Sonam WRAPS HERSELF around Taga and we see an EXPLOSION OF LIGHT that turns to--

Sonam FALLS THROUGH eternal black.

SONAM (V.O.)
And I severed myself from the Avatar cycle, hiding the forbidden knowledge forever.

EXT. SPIRIT WORLD - DAY

Aang stands in front of Sonam.

SONAM
And withered here in solitude, until you unlocked the staff and immediately handed it to the same person I had sacrificed my life to constrain!

Aang looks at her, determined.

AANG
Help me stop Taga and get back that staff.

SONAM
You sought the unknown, like I once did. And now, like me, you face the consequences.

AANG
But our people were wiped out. If I can't create new Airbenders, I may be the last of our kind! I need this power!

SONAM
That is exactly what Taga said. But this power is not for us to trifle with. I realize now that I reached too far.

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EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - DOCKS - NIGHT

The CABBAGE MERCHANT unloads crates of cabbages off a ship. He puts one down and SCHWOOOOOP they all get sucked out offscreen.

He puts another one down, then notices the one he just unloaded is empty.

CABBAGE MERCHANT
What the--

SCHWOOOOOOOP! This time we see who the culprit is -- Appa! He chomps on the cabbages, still wearing his silk ropes.

CABBAGE MERCHANT (CONT'D)
Hey, whose bison is this?!

KIDS (O.S.)
Look! Airbenders!!!

He turns to see Taga and his new Airbender Army flying in overhead on their own personal whirlwinds.

TAGA
Clear the streets! This is Airbender land!

Taga's soldiers start BLASTING people out of the way with airbending! The streets devolve into mayhem.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - NIGHT

Taga arrives at his destination, the CENTER SQUARE of Republic City. He's flanked by his followers.

TAGA
I can feel it.

He grips the staff tighter. An energy surges through it.

TAGA (CONT'D)
I reclaim this ground for the Airbenders!

SLAM! He jams the staff into the ground like a flag.

The WIND STARTS WHIPPING AROUND.

Taga's AURA BEGINS TO GLOW with DARK ENERGY.

3400 LEAVING SPIRIT WORLD

Property of Paramount Animation

EXT. SPIRIT WORLD - DAY

Suddenly there's a RUMBLING.

AANG
What's that?

Sonam shakes her head.

SONAM
Taga is finishing what he started. He's using my staff to raise the ancient temple once more. After that his powers will be too great to stop. Your world cannot be saved. I'm sorry.

She starts to FADE AWAY.

Aang looks in the distance and sees Sonam's GLOWING, MYSTICAL TEMPLE rising, floating up into the Spirit World sky like a spiritual A-Bomb headed towards a portal that leads to Republic City.

AANG
No! There must be a way to stop him and still return balance to the world and restore our culture!

SONAM
(fading into mist)
You refuse to see the truth. We cannot escape the consequences of our mistakes -- there is no way!

She DISAPPEARS as Aang falls to his knees, totally desperate.

AANG
There has to be! Everything I love is being destroyed and it's all my fault! Come back!

He's beaten and alone. He looks around for any sign of life or hope, but there's nothing.

AANG (CONT'D)
I got my friends lost in the spirit world... even if I could find them, how could I face them? Taga's going to destroy Republic City, then who's to stop him from attacking the rest of the world?
(MORE)

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AANG (CONT'D)
It's just like the Air Nomads all over again, only this time I brought it all on myself. Anyone who depends on me gets destroyed. I'm the worst Avatar ever.

Just then, Momo alights on his shoulder like a little angel. A little angel who licks Aang's ear.

Aang turns around to see his friends standing over him. He looks at them, amazed.

AANG (CONT'D)
How did you find me?

KATARA
We've been here the whole time.

SOKKA
Yeah, are you okay?

Aang looks around and realizes that he's--

BACK NEAR THE ROLLING HILLS

Right where he and his friends arrived in the spirit world.

He slowly stands, realizing the spirit world has been playing tricks with his mind. He tries to get his bearings, looking around to see what's real and what's not.

ZUKO
We could hear you talking to Sonam.

AANG
I'm so sorry. I ruined everything.

TOPH
Buck up, we still have a chance.

Aang shakes his head in despair as he sees something in the distance.

AANG
No. We don't.

He points to the temple in the distance, slowly floating into the sky. It is all too real.

AANG (CONT'D)
Taga is already in Republic City and he's summoning Sonam's temple!
(MORE)

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AANG (CONT'D)
Once he gets that thing he's going to be more powerful than we can imagine! There's no way we'll be able to stop him!

Everyone stares in awe at the massive spiritual weapon.

SOKKA
Whoa...

AANG
I tried to fix the past... but I only brought it back, made it worse... now everything we built together...

Aang is destroyed with grief. But then...

KATARA
Wait, he's taking that temple to Republic City?

They all share a look. Aang nods -- Katara is right. There's still a chance!

AANG
Let's go!

Katara grabs Aang's hand and they all run after the temple as it rises up out of the spirit world.

SOKKA
See Aang, Sonam just needed a smart girlfriend to help her out.

Aang smiles.

TOPH
Let's kick that crotchety old Airbender's butt!

As they run for the temple, A MASSIVE VORTEX hovers in the skies above them. That's the pathway to Republic City. It crackles with energy.

Aang turns to Katara.

AANG
I don't know how this will end, but I never would have made it this far without you.

KATARA
Let's go save our home.

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Aang looks at his friends, who all have his back. They race toward the unknown.

SEQUENCE 3500 TAGA RAISES THE TEMPLE

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - NIGHT

A BELL TOWER sounds the alarm as the CITIZENS OF REPUBLIC CITY panic and rush for cover from the devastating winds that Taga is creating.

With a final CLANG the winds tear the bell out of the tower and it lands with a CLUNK at the bottom as people SCREAM and run for safety.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - MAIN SQUARE - NIGHT

Taga GLOWS with dark energy, performing Ji Gong moves and summoning spiritual power never meant to be unlocked, creating a GLOWING FUNNEL that reaches into the heavens high above him.

It looks like a KILLER TORNADO right in the middle of town.

Suddenly CRACK! LIGHTNING spiderwebs across the sky!

A FISSURE SPLITS OPEN above Taga! LIGHT STREAMS OUT and the wind intensifies.

The citizens of Republic City look up in panic as they see the GIANT TEMPLE EMERGING from the hole in the sky, looming over them. It looks like its going to drop down and crush their whole city.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - DAY

GALE FORCE WINDS tear through the city, sending anything not tied down tumbling through the streets.

The Cabbage Merchant comes running into scene, watching his precious cart of cabbages get picked up and SMASHED into a wall.

CABBAGE MERCHANT
My cabbages!

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EXT. DOWNTOWN REPUBLIC CITY - DAY

Taga stands at the epicenter of the maelstrom. PURPLE LIGHTNING whips around him as he RISES INTO THE SKY at the center of his own tornado.

He levitates upward as the temple slowly sinks down to crush Republic City. The surrounding storm is like a hurricane and Taga's dark energy lights the sky.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - DAY

People huddle together with their families, praying they'll survive, tinged with the purple glow of Taga's energy, increasing covered by the GROWING SHADOW of the temple that floats above.

IN THE SKY

Taga floats up like a dark lord looking down on them all. Harbinger of their destruction.

He keeps RISING toward the temple, feeding off it as the whole structure GLOWS WITH POWER.

His tornado finally carries him to the top of the temple and he's BATHED IN ENERGY.

Astride the temple like a god, he can now execute his plan to bring forth a new Airbender Nation. The opposite of everything that Aang believes in.

He bellows down at the mere humans below him--

TAGA
Now I will become more powerful than Sonam ever dared to--

SOKKA (O.S.)
(cutting him off)
Hey, old man!

Taga is shocked to see Sokka on one of the tiered ledges below him.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
You *taga* too much!

Taga's eyes narrow. He's pissed and revs up to kill Sokka--

SOKKA (CONT'D)
(suddenly worried)
Aang!

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Aang appears behind Taga, rising up on his own tornado, eyes glowing, in the AVATAR STATE. Taga turns in time to see him, but not in time to react.

Aang AIRBENDS at Taga point blank in the chest.

TAGA
Gahh!

Taga is BLASTED off the peak of the temple and falls onto a lower ledge, only to be blasted again, this time by Toph who earthbends a rock at him!

The rest of Team Avatar appears out of the Temple and attacks! Taga tumbles backwards down the temple.

Taga tries to steady himself with airbending. He finds his footing but he's boomeranged in the face! Then attacked with fire and ice! He TUMBLES DOWN until...

Taga SLAMS onto the ground!

AANG
Pin him in!

Team Avatar drops to the ground of Republic City around Taga, never stopping their attack.

Taga tries to roll to his feet but Katara freezes him in place and Toph pins him between two boulders, sending the staff flying out of Taga's hand.

AANG (CONT'D)
Sokka--

SOKKA
On it!

Sokka runs over to grab the staff, but just as he reaches down, a gust of wind lifts it up!

SOKKA (CONT'D)
What the--

It flies up and over our team. They watch the staff as it lands in the hands of an ancient airbender, TAGA'S LIEUTENANT.

ON AANG: his jaw falls open as he sees that Taga has arrived in Republic City with more Airbenders!

Taga is bloodied and battered but smiles with satisfaction.

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TAGA
You see, Avatar, there have always been Airbenders who believe as I do...

His Lieutenant airbends the staff to Taga who catches it with his free hand, instantly powering up and bursting from the ice!

TAGA (CONT'D)
And we cannot be stopped.

Our team bends at Taga simultaneously! But he does a MASSIVE AIRBENDING SPIN, blocking the attack and blasting our heroes!

Team Avatar is knocked off their feet and slides across the ground. Taga yells to his minions--

TAGA (CONT'D)
Destroy the city! Kill them all!

He airbends straight up, popping open his glider and taking flight up toward the temple.

SEQUENCE 3650 TEAM AVATAR JOINS THE FIGHT

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - NIGHT

Aang starts to fly up after Taga but Taga's minions leap on him to hold him back.

Aang switches into AVATAR STATE and blasts them back. His friends quickly leap in to help.

KATARA
Go stop Taga! We'll deal with them!

SOKKA
We will?

Aang pops open his glider and leaps into the air! Fire, rock and air explode beneath Aang as he rockets after Taga.

As he goes, our team leaps into battle!

ON SOKKA

As he backs away from an Airbender who uses a bow and arrow along with airbending, to fire shot after shot that he parries with his war club.

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SOKKA (CONT'D)
Enough defense!

He pulls out his boomerang and throws it at her.

It looks like a direct hit but she AIRBENDS IT and sends it back at him like a missile!

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Boomerang, no!

He barely ducks it as it SMASHES THROUGH a brick wall. Sokka, panicked, takes off running with the Airbender in hot pursuit.

ON TOPH

As she launches rocks at a small Airbender who dodges them and bounces off of them, firing his darts at her in mid-air, making them impossible for her to see.

THUNK! THUNK!

TOPH
Aargh!

She takes two in the arm. She quickly covers up with ROCK ARMOR.

Zuko steps in, FIREBENDING to clear the LITTLE AIRBENDER away.

But a HUGE AIRBENDER comes lumbering in and SMASH! Zuko rolls away as Huge Airbender brings a massive spear down where Zuko used to be.

Zuko steps up to strike with firebending but Huge Airbender takes a MASSIVE AIRBENDING SWING that knocks Zuko back.

His legs sink into the ground as Toph earthbends him.

Little Airbender fires another mid-air dart attack at Toph and one finds a crack in her rock armor, hitting her thigh.

TOPH (CONT'D)
Aargh! I can't cover up enough!

She earthbends a TUNNEL and disappears underground. Little Airbender dives in to give chase.

Meanwhile, Huge Airbender crawls out of the ground and keeps fighting Zuko.

ON KATARA

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Who barely has enough water in her pouch to hold off Taga's Lieutenant. Lieutenant attacks with two swords but every swing also comes with an airbending strike that knocks Katara off balance.

When she tries to waterbend she can't generate enough power to get through the steel and wind -- it's an attack she's never faced before.

She yells over to Zuko, who gets WINDSLAMMED against a wall by Huge Airbender.

KATARA
Cover me, we have to get to the playground!

ZUKO
The playground?

Katara runs off without explaining and Zuko shoots a MASSIVE FIREBENDING ATTACK at Huge Airbender and Lieutenant, sending them diving for cover.

SEQUENCE 3700 AANG VS. TAGA PART ONE

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY SKIES - NIGHT

Taga glides/bends up the face of the temple. He reaches the top and gets ready to land, about to access its power--

But Aang appears from the other side, heading right for him! Aang quickly closes the glider and spins his staff blasting a wind vortex at Taga, knocking him from the sky!

Taga tumbles through the air but manages to pop open his glider and catches himself.

TAGA
Why do you even want this power? To create more Airbenders only to watch them die?

He swoops back up, narrowly avoiding more air-blasts from Aang who is back on his glider and right on his tail!

TAGA (CONT'D)
What would you have done if you had been there when the Fire Nation attacked? Run?

AANG
I wouldn't become a murderer!

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TAGA
No, you'd become a corpse!

Taga weaves around buildings and narrow alleys. He skims the ground and shoots up into the sky, looping and barrel rolling his glider, trying to shake Aang.

TAGA (CONT'D)
I didn't just stand by and watch Airbenders die. I fought back.

But Aang is too good! He uses firebending to boost himself like a jet. He smoothly leaps off of his glider onto rooftops -- earthbending bricks or tapping into water-towers to waterbend -- before seamlessly jumping back on his glider and continuing his pursuit!

TAGA (CONT'D)
You and Sonam build a culture of weakness and wonder why it dies.

Aang chases, relentless, pushing with all he's got.

It finally looks like he's got Taga in his sights. He GOES INTO THE AVATAR STATE.

AANG
Non-violence isn't weakness, it's the greatest show of strength.

He's about to strike with all his power.

TAGA
No, the greatest show of strength is survival.

But Taga turns as Aang draws close, and he strikes Aang with a DARK ENERGY AIRBENDING PUNCH!

The hit KNOCKS AANG OUT OF THE AVATAR STATE.

TAGA (CONT'D)
You're just as foolish as Sonam! We are all that is left! How much more proof do you need that your doctrine of nonviolence has cost our people everything?

And before Aang knows what's happening, Taga shoots off, headed back for the temple.

SEQUENCE 3800 TEAM BATTLES

Property of Paramount Animation

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - NIGHT

Sokka runs through the street as arrows fly over his head.

He sees what he's looking for and DUCKS INTO--

A SHOP full of junk. It looks like some kind of low-budget mechanical repair store.

The Ancient Airbender comes sprinting up and SKIDS to a stop in front of the store. She hesitates for a moment. Is this a trap? What's he doing in there?

She carefully goes to open the door when--

SMASH! Sokka comes bursting through the plate glass window on the flying bike invention he was showing to the kids in the Southern Water Tribe!

The Ancient Airbender hits the deck, sees him getting away, then starts firing arrows at him.

ON THE BIKE

Sokka flies down an alley, dodging arrows.

SOKKA
Haha!

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - AQUEDUCT - NIGHT

In the dimly lit underground of Republic City, a TUNNEL OPENS up and Toph pops out with a SPLASH.

A little moonlight streams down from some rain gutters and a manhole. Toph stands silently for a moment.

She hears a HISS and earthbends herself down just in time to avoid the shurikens aimed at her head.

Little Airbender is climbing along the walls of the aqueduct toward Toph.

TOPH
You can't hit what you can't see.

She EARTHBENDS the tunnel and grates closed, turning the aqueduct into--

COMPLETE BLACKOUT.

Toph STOMPS and the vibrations turn into--

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TOPH VISION -- Little Airbender is in a corner.

TOPH (CONT'D)
Gotcha.

Toph shoots a rock at him that HITS him in the head, knocking him out, and ENCASES HIM completely in a little rock box.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - NIGHT

The ground OPENS UP and Toph pops out of the underground, running off to help the others.

CUT TO:

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - NIGHT

Huge Airbender and Lieutenant chase Zuko through the streets.

HUGE AIRBENDER
Where did they go?

LIEUTENANT
Here!

They turn a corner into--

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

Huge Airbender and Lieutenant arrive in the playground, which is now filled with STEAM, obscuring their view.

HUGE AIRBENDER
I can clear this out.

He raises his danda to make a massive airbending swing when a WATER TENDRIL REACHES OUT and YANKS it out of his hand.

WHAM! Both of them are hit with a waterbending wave that SLAMS them against a wall and ICES them in place.

But they both BURST OUT as Katara and Zuko come in to attack.

Lieutenant's whirling swords quickly clear the air and she begins a fast and furious duel with Katara. But now Katara has plenty of water from the fountain to use.

Meanwhile, Huge Airbender comes after Zuko with his massive fists, airpunching Zuko's fireblasts out of the air.

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He bullrushes through Zuko's attacks using pure strength, pushing through the fire damage.

He raises his massive spear to whack Zuko, but Zuko FIREBENDS AT THE SPEAR, superheating it--

HUGE AIRBENDER (CONT'D)
Aaaaagh!

He drops the spear and it hits him in the head, knocking him silly. Zuko leaps up and KICKS HIM IN THE FACE, finishing the job.

As Katara fights, a TORNADO WHIRLS THROUGH, and she hears a MASSIVE CRACKING and SCREAMING.

They turn to see the crumbling building behind them -- THE SCHOOLHOUSE.

As a wall collapses we can see that the building is filled with KIDS who played with Katara earlier huddling around a TEACHER.

KATARA
No!

Katara runs to help and Lieutenant sees her chance to finish Katara. But before she can hit her in the back--

WHACK! A boulder takes out Lieutenant as Toph comes running in.

TOPH
Get them out!

She earthbends a support to hold it up.

Katara leads the kids into the courtyard just before the BUILDING COLLAPSES INTO RUBBLE.

ZUKO
We gotta move, this whole city is coming down!

As the team runs off--

KATARA
Where's Sokka?

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - NIGHT

Sokka rides his bike, Ancient Airbender firing arrows at him.

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He takes a tight turn down an alley to avoid them.

But Ancient Airbender AIRBENDS and the arrows make the turn after him like guided missiles!

One hits his back engine, causing it to FLAME OUT.

SOKKA
Uh-oh.

He kicks at it and gets it started again, but it SPUTTERS on and off.

He looks behind him and sees Ancient Airbender coming after him, using her airbending to leap from building to building, giving her the high ground to make incredible shots at him.

He HITS THE GAS and CLIMBS, causing Ancient Airbender arrows to fly under him--

SOKKA (CONT'D)
Yeah!

--but then PLUH! His engine dies.

SOKKA (CONT'D)
No!

He starts to plummet when he hears--

APPA
(BELLOWS)

He looks back, Ancient Airbender has him in her sights. He's dead.

Ancient Airbender fires! Sokka jumps off his bike!

Appa SWOOPS IN and catches him while TURNING and AIRBENDING with his tail, sending the arrow and Sokka's bike hurtling right back at the Ancient Airbender.

BOOM! The bike EXPLODES sending the Airbender tumbling off the building, unconscious.

SOKKA
Appa! I'm so happy to see you!

They fly back into the action.

SEQUENCE 3900 AANG VS. TAGA PART TWO

Property of Paramount Animation

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Aang chases Taga and goes into the Avatar state, ready to take him out.

But just as he's about to attack, Taga hits him again with the dark energy airbending punch!

Aang is knocked out of the Avatar state again and Taga charges in and SMASHES Aang with an airbending blast that sends him hurtling toward the ground.

TAGA
Stand aside and let someone who will protect our people take over!

Aang manages to get back into the Avatar state.

AANG
Violence isn't the Air Nomad way! Without our principles, our people are nothing.

TAGA
If your principles live but our people do not, then who are they for?

Taga tries to escape, flying up into the sky, but Aang closes in on him again.

Taga winds up to deliver the dark energy airbending punch again, but this time Aang is ready.

When Taga's dark energy hits, Aang channels it and deflects it, letting the energy pass through him and shooting it out behind him.

The power of the blast propels him forward even faster, sending him CRASHING INTO TAGA!

Aang is still in the Avatar state, high over Republic City.

He clutches Taga, with all the elements swirling around him. HE IS THE FULL EMBODIMENT OF SUPERMAN! We've never seen Aang more powerful!

AANG
Taga. Stop this now!

TAGA
Your ways will never work, Avatar! Leave it to me and Air Nomads will fill the skies again!

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AANG
Enough!

Aang BLASTS Taga with everything he's got, and it finally looks like Taga is done.

Taga falls from the sky... floating... in a daze...

Then he spots something below.

THE TEMPLE.

TAGA nosedives for the temple.

TAGA
Now I will save the Air Nomads.

Aang sees what he's doing and RACES after him.

AANG
No!

But Aang can't catch up, and at the last second, Taga flips and lands on his feet directly on the top of the temple, sticking his staff in the top. BOOM!

Taga ENVELOPS HIMSELF in a cocoon of energy shields, drawing every bit of power he can from the Temple.

TAGA
(YELLS)

A MASSIVE SHOCKWAVE of spirit energy EXPLODES OUT from the temple.

Aang is BLASTED BACK by the shockwave. He tumbles away, down the side of the temple, unconscious.

The shockwave washes over Republic City, sending both our heroes and Taga's Airbenders ducking for cover.

Taga holds the staff as it CONNECTS TO THE POWER of the temple. It's like the key has slid into the ignition, and now this massive spirit energy engine has started.

Taga starts to GLOW as he does some Ji Gong movements, creating an ORB of energy around him, summoning more of the temple's power.

He DOUBLES IN SIZE and his face begins twisting into a demonic visage.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!

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Taga, now an undefeatable force, looks down at Republic City.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Look upon the dawn of the new Air Empire!

He begins WHIRLING FURIOUSLY, peaceful Qi Gong transformed into an act of destruction.

He summons a MASSIVE TORNADO AROUND THE ENTIRE CITY!

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Debris created in the storm and Airbender attacks is swirling around, flying through the sky.

Katara and Zuko try to evacuate some people from a tower that's crumbling down. Toph earthbends next to her, using all her energy to create a support.

KATARA
(to Toph)
Keep it up!
(to the people)
Hurry!

TOPH
(straining)
I can't hold this much longer...
(then)
...wait, is this thing getting lighter?

As the last of the people come running out of the bottom, the tower straightens up.

KATARA
Alright Toph, I think that's everyone.

TOPH
Uh, I'm not doing anything.

They watch as the tower slowly gets SUCKED UP into the sky by the power of the storm. They look around to see other whole buildings start to get pulled up, whole or in pieces.

But then--

MOTHER
Help!

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KATARA
Someone is still in there!

A MOTHER holding a baby sticks her head out of a top window.

SOKKA (O.S.)
We got this!

Sokka flies in on Appa as the mother climbs out onto a balcony as the whole building is flying away.

Suddenly THE BALCONY COLLAPSES! Sokka grabs her hand.

The baby is slipping out of its blanket, and the mother can't hold on... it's going to get sucked away!

But Momo flies in and GRABS the infant at the last second and everyone makes it aboard Appa.

The building floats up for a moment and then KABLAM! It's shattered into bits by the force of the wind.

SEQUENCE 4000 AANG POWERS UP

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - GROUND - NIGHT

Aang comes to and sees the swirling storm destroying his city. He manages to get to his feet and goes into the Avatar state, then LAUNCHES HIMSELF up into the storm.

He can see Taga hovering overhead, surrounded by a fortress of wind. The wind is too strong for Aang to fly up to Taga, and Aang is PUSHED BACK, tumbling into a FLYING ROOF that's swirling in the whirlwind.

Other chunks of buildings and debris fly around in the air and Aang tries to LEAP from flying platform to flying platform, trying to reach Taga.

But Taga is too powerful. He looks down at Aang from high above, and Aang seems tiny in comparison.

TAGA
Poor Avatar. Too weak to save your home.

Aang hangs on to a piece of the destroyed bell tower, looking down at what's left of his city, floating in a current of destruction.

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TAGA (CONT'D)
Watch as I wipe your pathetic city off the map and replace it with my empire of power!

THUNK! Taga gets hit with a cabbage to the face.

CABBAGE MERCHANT (O.S.)
Take that you jerk!

Taga looks down at the partially destroyed city and sees the Cabbage Merchant standing with the team of construction workers Aang saw when he and Katara were flying over the city with Appa.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 1
Get out of Republic City!

He earthbends a giant boulder down on a plank set up like a see-saw, firing a whole BUSHEL OF CABBAGES up at Taga that hit him in the face. It's ineffective, but insulting.

OTHER BENDERS from Republic City join in, all of them doing whatever they can to fight Taga. Firing potshots in the air.

CITIZENS OF REPUBLIC CITY
Yeah! Get out of our town!

Taga smiles cruelly and turns to focus his terrible force on the rebellious citizens.

Still holding the staff, he directs a TORNADO AT THEM.

But a HUGE ROCK SHIELD pops up in front of them as Toph earthbends a fortress to protect them.

Taga turns to his Ancient Airbenders.

TAGA
Eradicate these trespassers!

Katara and the rest of Team Avatar joins the fight, ready to make their last stand to defend their home.

Aang watches the brave citizens of the city he helped to build, standing with his best friends and the woman he loves, all about to be DESTROYED BY THE EVIL THAT HE UNLEASHED.

Another failure. More blood on his hands.

His eyes turn to TAGA'S STAFF.

He needs that power. He hears Sonam's words...

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SONAM (V.O.)
This power is not for us to trifle with. I realize now that I reached too far.

Aang shakes his head.

AANG
I don't have a choice.

Aang goes into the Avatar state and flies through the whirlwind, his eyes on the staff.

Taga and his Airbenders are distracted by the little rebellion, trying to snuff out the last remaining light of Republic City, as Aang closes in on his target...

On the ground below, Sokka falls. Then Zuko. Toph's rock barriers ERODE in the wind and she's thrown backward.

Aang flies through the storm, giving everything to reach Taga...

Katara DIGS IN, still standing, never giving up, but she's surrounded by Ancient Airbenders and about to be torn to pieces...

...when Aang ZIPS PAST TAGA AND GRABS THE STAFF!

Taga is shocked!

TAGA
The staff! Get it!

Taga and the Ancient Airbenders immediately stop attacking the people on the ground and turn to catch Aang.

But it's too late! Aang has the staff and he LANDS ON TOP OF THE TEMPLE! He starts CHANNELING THE POWER.

Taga sees him transforming, and we see fear in his eyes for the first time.

Aang DOUBLES IN SIZE, turning himself into the same kind of monstrosity that Taga is.

Katara helps up her friends, who all barely survived, but now she looks up and sees something that turns her blood to ice.

KATARA'S POV: Giant Aang, as big as Taga now, filled with the corruptive power of the temple. The love of her life has turned himself into a monster.

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KATARA
No.

ON THE TEMPLE

Powered-up Aang, now bigger and stronger than ever and bursting with the power of the Avatar, rushes at Taga and TACKLES HIM OUT OF THE SKY.

Taga's storm stops and debris rains down on Republic City, terrifying everyone.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - NIGHT

BOOM! Aang takes Taga to the ground, causing a shockwave like a bomb. The parts of Republic City that haven't been decimated already SHAKE.

Aang stands to attack Taga, but Taga hits Aang with an INCREDIBLE AIRBENDING BLAST that sends him SKIDDING through the streets.

Aang pops back up and ROCKETS BACK to Taga, creating an amped-up Avatar-powered giant blast that carries Taga into the bay.

But Taga whips up a WHIRLWIND to carry him right back into battle.

Team Avatar watches in dismay.

ZUKO
This is out of control.

SOKKA
They're going to destroy everything.

Taga realizes he's going to need some help and calls out to his ancient Airbenders.

TAGA
Comrades! Come fight with me!

The ancient Airbenders all circle around Taga, ready to defend him from the Avatar.

But now Aang is feeding off the power of the staff and becoming stronger even than Taga. He GLOWS with intense energy.

Ancient Airbenders come at him and he FIREBENDS one and AIRBENDS another, SMASHING one with earthbending and FREEZING another out of the sky.

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All the while he STOMPS toward Taga.

He uses the staff to SWAT the rest of the ancient Airbenders out of the sky like gnats and then starts BEATING TAGA WITH THE STAFF.

His face twists. He's losing himself to rage.

SEQUENCE 4100 KATARA'S PLEA

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - NIGHT

Katara watches Aang losing control.

KATARA
We have to stop this! Appa!

Appa flies over to her and she jumps on.

Aang, completely lost in the cycle of violence and retribution, BEATS TAGA WITH THE STAFF.

Taga goes from fighting back to holding up his hands to defend himself.

It's clear this can only end one way.

And Aang is not stopping.

KATARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Aang! Aang!

Aang looks over at her flying next to him. He seems completely lost in the destructive power.

KATARA (CONT'D)
This isn't you! Remember how you stopped the war? You refused to give in to hate, refused to take a life. Even the Fire Lord!

Aang looks puzzled, like he can't remember. It was a different lifetime, lost in so many lifetimes.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

ON Sokka, Zuko, Toph, Momo, and the Citizens looking up and listening to Katara.

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KATARA
Everything we've built here together was founded on love, acceptance, forgiveness. That's what the Air Nomads were about, and that's what you've given to the world.

She gestures to Taga.

KATARA (CONT'D)
Look at him, Aang.

Aang looks down at Taga, beaten almost senseless.

KATARA (CONT'D)
He's an Airbender. Just like you. Everything that he has destroyed today can be fixed. But if you let him force you into hate and vengeance... that's something that can never be repaired.

Aang takes a breath. The spell is broken. Aang realizes how close he came to betraying himself. He steadies himself.

AANG
You're right, Katara. I was willing to sacrifice everything to bring back the Airbenders.

He steps back, regaining his noble self, returning to the Aang we all love.

AANG (CONT'D)
But I can't give up what we've built, everything my people stood for, just for the power of airbending. That was never what we were about.

4200 AANG'S SACRIFICE

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Taga lies on the street, barely alive. He looks up at Aang.

TAGA
If you listen to her, if you give in to weakness, our people are dead forever. You will be the last Airbender.

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AANG
Taga, I want to bring the Airbenders back more than anything. But if it means turning into you... that's too much.

TAGA
Kill me and take the power! I would gladly give my life to know that Airbenders live on!

AANG
If I kill you I'll destroy everything our culture stands for. I won't be responsible for that.

He raises the staff and it GLOWS WITH POWER.

Then he SNAPS IT IN HALF!

Taga can't believe it--

TAGA
No!

But as soon as the staff breaks, all of its energy starts POURING OUT OF AANG!

Taga JERKS AS DARK ENERGY FIRES OUT OF HIM!

All of the ANCIENT AIRBENDERS stop where they are as the energy leaves them.

All of it streaming up into the sky, SHOOTING INTO THE TEMPLE!

The DARK ENERGY DRAINS from Taga. He and Aang both SHRINK BACK to their regular sizes as the power continues to flow back into the temple.

The power that kept the ancient Airbenders alive diminishes, and one by one they TURN TO DUST and BLOW AWAY on the wind.

Up in the sky THE TEMPLE STARTS TO COLLAPSE. As it falls apart, it gets sucked up into the energy vortex in the sky where it emerged from the spirit world.

Taga looks up at Aang, desperate, wasting away.

TAGA (CONT'D)
Why?

Aang kneels beside him.

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AANG
I know exactly what you went through, losing your people. I know the guilt you feel, the anger. But this power... it was never meant for us. I'm sorry.

TAGA
You fool! You've given up any chance to return Airbenders to the world! Dug the final mass grave of our people!

More of the temple COLLAPSES and floats away. This is the end.

AANG
If your ideas represent the future of the Air Nomads, then our people should stay in the past.

He stands and walks away.

Taga sees the staff lying on the ground nearby.

The pieces start to float in the air, getting sucked up into the vortex with the rest of the temple.

Taga uses the last bit of his strength to leap up and chase them, grabbing them as they float up, getting pulled up into the sky.

TAGA
I won't let you sacrifice our people again, Avatar!

He rises up into the sky, standing on a last little piece of the temple as the spirit vortex almost closes.

TAGA (CONT'D)
If the Airbenders die, this whole world will die with them!

He sticks the pieces of the staff together and summons the last power that's left in the temple, FREEZING THE ENERGY VORTEX OPEN!

ENERGY LIGHTNING FLIES OUT of the vortex! Whatever it strikes is vaporized.

Lightning strikes the fountain at the playground and people DIVE FOR COVER AS IT'S REDUCED TO A CRATER!

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Aang sees Taga ready to execute the world to get his vengeance. He knows what he has to do.

KABOOM! Another energy lightning strike vaporizes part of the docks.

Aang turns to his friends and locks eyes with Katara.

AANG
This is your world. Take care of it. It's time to say goodbye to the past.

Before anyone can respond he BLINKS into the Avatar state and FLIES OFF.

KATARA
Aang!

Aang heads towards Taga with intent.

Taga holds up the staff in a defensive position, ready to fend off Aang.

But as Aang flies in he hits Taga with the SPIRIT ENERGY PUNCH that Taga used on him earlier.

It breaks the staff and Aang PUSHES TAGA THROUGH THE VORTEX, FOLLOWING HIM IN!

They're gone.

SEQUENCE 4300 THE BATTLE ENDS

EXT. SPIRIT WORLD - CONTINUOUS

Aang and Taga fall through BLACKNESS getting further and further away from the hole, which slowly closes behind them.

Then he sees someone coming toward him. It's Sonam!

She encircles Taga with energybending.

SONAM
Thank you for fixing my mistakes. You did what I could not. Now I will take Taga. There was good in him once, perhaps I can find it again. I owe him that. Goodbye.

She and Taga disappear.

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EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - STREETS - NIGHT

Everyone looks up at the sky as the portal becomes nothing but a pinprick in the black, smaller than a star.

KATARA
(to herself)
Where are you? Where are you?

Finally the portal closes. It's nothing but darkness.

THEN IT EXPLODES LIKE A SUPERNOVA!

Everyone shields their eyes. Slowly the light fades.

Katara looks back up in the sky. Everything is hopeless now. Sokka reaches over and hugs her.

KATARA (CONT'D)
Wait...

She sees something.

KATARA (CONT'D)
...is that...

AANG IS FALLING OUT OF THE SKY!

Team Avatar runs to where he's headed, then Zuko FIREJETS Katara over to the spot.

TOPH earthbends a platform underneath her and LIFTS HER UP.

Katara WATERBENDS herself up into the sky and CATCHES AANG!

They float for a moment in the air, Katara cradling Aang as his eyes slowly open.

AANG
Hey Katara.

KATARA
Welcome back, stranger.

They kiss as they sink slowly and safely back down to earth into the waiting hugs of Team Avatar as...

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - ROOFTOPS - DAYBREAK

Dawn breaks over Republic City as the citizens CHEER for the survival of Avatar Aang and the city they built together!

FADE TO:

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SEQUENCE 4400 EPILOGUE

INSERT CHYRON: A YEAR LATER.

EXT. REPUBLIC CITY - AIR TEMPLE ISLAND - DAY

Momo sits on Aang's shoulder as he walks past the new Air Temple being built by his supporters, the Air Acolytes.

KATARA (V.O.)
Hey!

He turns to see Katara coming over, very pregnant.

KATARA
How's it coming?

Aang nods.

AANG
Good I think.
(re: acolytes)
I know they're not really Airbenders, but they're keeping the culture alive, and that's good enough for now.

KATARA
I'm glad.

She gives him a kiss.

KATARA (CONT'D)
So where's this super important thing you have me waddling out here to see?

He smiles and grabs her hand.

AANG
Come on.

EXT. FAR AWAY PLAINS - DAY

We are in tall, tall grass in a grassland that we've never, ever seen before. There isn't a city or a mountain to be found anywhere. The grass goes on for miles-and-miles like a quivering green ocean.

AANG (V.O.)
You won't believe this. They just andom discovered them last week.

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Aang pops up to an overlook of a HUGE FIELD OF AIR BISON! There are multiple families of them -- bulls, cows... and CALVES! SO MANY CALVES!

ON Aang, looking over this most beautiful sight. There are no words to describe his happiness.

We PULL OUT to see that Zuko, Toph, Sokka, Momo, and Appa have come to witness this.

Appa snorts, and suddenly, THE ENTIRE HERD TURNS IN UNISON AND STARES AT US. A few curious calves sniff the air and walk toward us.

Aang looks at his crew.

AANG
You guys want to go for a ride?

PRE-LAP, the SOUND OF RUMBLING...

CUT TO:

EXT. FAR AWAY PLAINS - THE AIR BISON FIELDS - LATER

The rumbling is coming from an AIR BISON STAMPEDE as we see THOUSANDS OF AIR BISON RUNNING TOGETHER through the ocean of grass!

Within the Stampede, we FIND Katara, Toph, Zuko and Sokka riding Appa and AANG IS ON A WILD AIR BISON that we've never seen before (let's call her HAMI)!

The Stampede charges towards a high, high cliff and the ENTIRE HERD LEAPS OFF THE CLIFF AND FLIES UP IN THE AIR!

THE END

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